The Professoriate in an Age of Assessment and Accountability: Understanding Faculty Response to Student Learning Outcomes Assessment and the Collegiate Learning Assessment

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation examines the increasingly prominent and expansive role of student learning outcomes and student learning outcomes assessment in bachelor's degree-granting institutions. As higher education institutions integrate assessment into the curriculum, the voices of faculty remain largely unheard. Therefore, this study sought to reveal their voice, and in so doing, try to understand why collective faculty response to student learning outcomes assessment like the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) varies among undergraduate institutions. In asking this question, I wanted to understand how faculty perceive assessment impacting their professions, their identity as professors, and their role in the institution.

Using a multi-case study, qualitative design, I selected four small, private institutions. The fifth institution that participated in my study was a mid-sized, public institution. Participants consisted of faculty and administrators in each institution involved in governance, curriculum, and assessment. The primary method of data collection was semi-structured interviews.

In this age of student learning outcomes assessment, my research showed that faculty are navigating, negotiating, and renegotiating their position and role within the

institution; grappling with defining how, and if, assessment is part of the professorial role; and working in concert, and sometimes in conflict, with administrators to establish the jurisdiction of assessment. This study fills a gap in the professionalization literature by addressing more fully the interaction of professionalized roles in organizations and the interaction of professional groups within an organization. I also offer directions for further research.

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When I started this dissertation, I was Esther Hong and lived in a tiny apartment with a sloping floor on 105th Street and Broadway. Now, at its conclusion so many years

later, I am Esther Hong Delaney, living in a different part of the country, and mother to two incredible boys. Through all of life's changes, one person has been my constant. And so to my husband, Paul, I would like to raise my glass. I did this for us.

Esther Hong Delaney
April 7, 2015

This is dedicated to my two little boys, Jacob and Lucas, who would knock on my office door at the end of a long day of writing to remind me “to come outside and play.”

And to my great, great aunt Helen Kim, who received her PhD from Teachers College in 1931, the first Korean woman to receive a doctorate.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Overview

On September 19, 2005, speaking at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings announced the formation of a Commission on the Future of Higher Education. According to the press release issued by the U.S. Department of Education, the Commission would be "charged with developing a comprehensive national strategy for postsecondary education that will meet the needs of America's diverse population and also address the economic and workforce needs of the country's future" (http://www2.ed.gov/news/pressreleases/2005/09/09192005.html). In her prepared remarks, Secretary Spellings noted the lack of public discussion around the return on investment in higher education. Thus, the Commission planned to examine this issue as it scrutinized higher education at the federal level, including re-examining the role of accountability in higher education institutions.

A year later the Commission published its recommendations, which included a suggestion for higher education institutions to measure and publicly report student learning outcomes (SLO). " 'For years higher education has said that we do something very special that only we can understand,' said Robert M. Zemsky, chief executive of the Learning Alliance for Higher Education at the University of Pennsylvania and a member of the Spellings Commission. 'We can't do that anymore. An increasing number of people are becoming concerned that it's all smoke and mirrors' " (Field 2006). One oft-cited example of the lack of reported SLO in higher education are findings (rather, the lack thereof) from the 2000 and 2002 editions of *Measuring Up*—the self-named

"National Report Card on Higher Education" published by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education—where all states were assigned an incomplete grade on performance on student learning (the sixth and final category on the report card) due to insufficient data and no systematic way to compare institutions in this amorphous category.

Building on the momentum generated from the Commission, proponents for increased accountability—often legislators, business groups, and foundations—have since advocated the use of standardized assessments to measure SLO consistently across institutions. One such repeatedly mentioned assessment is the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), a general skills test developed and released in 2004 by the RAND Corporation and the Council for Aid to Education (then a subsidiary of RAND), to measure how much undergraduate students have advanced on higher-order thinking skills such as critical thinking and written communication from their first year to senior year as a result of attending a particular institution. Standardized assessments like the CLA have been marketed heavily to traditional, bachelor's degree-granting institutions as the recent trend in SLO-based accountability has largely focused on this sector of higher education. "Accountability approaches in the United States focus almost exclusively on undergraduate education . . . The reason is that external publics perceive undergraduate education rather than graduate studies or faculty research as a problem" (Burke 2005:xiii).

Advocacy for institutional accountability of SLO and advocacy for assessments to measure these outcomes is not new to higher education (Brint 2011; Ewell 2005). In the 1980s there were many reports decrying the quality of K-16 education in the U.S., most notably *A Nation at Risk* in 1983. During this decade, two-thirds of states mandated via

legislation that public colleges and universities adopt plans for assessing student learning (Burke 2005:7). Within these plans, institutions were required to:

> (1) develop statements of student learning outcomes for general education and for each major program, (2) propose concrete evidence-gathering mechanisms on student performance against these goals, (3) create organizational pathways to use the resulting information to improve curriculum and pedagogy, and (4) prepare a public report summarizing both assessment results and what was done with them (Ewell 2005:110).

However, a significant challenge was that institutions were not required to use the same outcomes metrics. Additionally, an economic recession turned the focus away from assessment and toward efficient management of the organization.

Performance reporting, popular in the 1990s at four-year institutions and community colleges, focused on efficiency and effectiveness, emphasizing outputs and outcomes. While there was no explicit connection between an institution's performance and its funding, the "main spur for institutional improvement [was] not so much threatened shifts in government funding but rather changes in institutional self-awareness and public reputation" (Dougherty and Hong 2006:53).

What distinguishes accountability discussions in this last decade is that its proponents have highlighted a role for SLO assessment, and proposed specific standardized assessments like the CLA. "Accountability," as defined by Peter Ewell, Vice President at the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), refers "to the constellation of mechanisms that colleges and universities employ to demonstrate to their external publics that they are responsible stewards of the resources invested in them, that they are soundly managed, and that they produce the kinds of results that they are expected to produce" (Ewell 2005:104). "Assessment," defined in the American Association for Higher Education and Accreditation's

Assessment Forum (1992), is "a program of locally designed and operated evaluation research intended to determine the effects of a college or university on its students, centered on learning outcomes, and engaged in principally for the purpose of improving teaching and learning" (Ewell 2005:105). Whereas accountability, traditionally reported to external groups, lies primarily within the jurisdiction of the university president and administrators, the American Association of University Professors—according to Gary Rhoades, the General Secretary at the time—sees assessment activities of student learning and reform of teaching and academic programs as "core academic activities" that belong exclusively in the professors' jurisdiction (Gold, Rhoades, Smith, and Kuh 2011).

Hence, the articulation of a role for assessment in accountability, particularly given top-down pressure to implement a standardized assessment examining general skills acquisition amongst undergraduates, raises questions. Is this assessment for improvement for teaching and learning, or assessment for accountability, or some combination of the two? What impact does this latest direction in accountability have on autonomy—not only the university's, but also the professor's? Debates have ignited in colleges and universities struggling to find a delicate balance as to who manages assessment for accountability, who manages assessment for improving teaching and learning, and how to reconcile the two.

The voices of university faculty remain largely still, at least beyond the confines of the institution itself, in discussions of accountability and SLO assessment. This is not necessarily because faculty are silent on the topic but more likely because their responses have not been systematically explored and shared. Yet, as a key constituent group in higher education—some might argue that they are, as Talcott Parsons indicated, the

"structural core" of the organization (1971)—understanding faculty response to SLO assessment in an era of (renewed) accountability is critical.

Therefore, this study explored collective faculty response to SLO assessment at bachelor's degree-granting postsecondary institutions. Using a multi-case study methodology to illustrate this phenomenon, the knowledge generated from this study helps us better understand the key causal factors driving faculty response. In doing so, I hoped to expand our understanding of the dynamic between the academic profession and the postsecondary institution, and its larger implications for the assessment and accountability movement in higher education.

In this chapter, I set the background and context by describing broadly the past decade of the accountability and assessment movement in U.S. higher education, focusing on the increasingly prominent role of SLO assessments—especially the CLA. I then provide two illustrations of how faculty at two different institutions reacted to the implementation of the CLA on their campuses. This leads to an articulation of the problem and research questions, and finally towards an argument for the significance of this research project, whereby I assert that understanding collective faculty response to SLO assessment enhances our understanding of the professoriate: how they perceive accountability and assessment impacting their profession, their identity as professors, and their role in the institution.

Background and Context

An Age of Accountability and Assessment in Higher Education

When U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings announced the formation of a Commission on the Future of Higher Education in September 2005, she advocated

for parents and policymakers to have better information on "what's working well and what needs to work better" (http://www.ed.gov/print/news/speeches/2005/09/09192005.html). The Commission's charter stated as its purpose:

> … [to] consider how best to improve our system of higher education to ensure that our graduates are well prepared to meet our future workforce needs and are able to participate fully in the changing economy. To accomplish this purpose, the Commission shall consider Federal, state, local, and institutional roles in higher education and analyze whether the current goals of higher education are appropriate and achievable.

In the ensuing months, the Commission, led by Charles Miller, the former Chairman of the Board of Regents of the University of Texas System, focused on encouraging postsecondary institutions to be more transparent and responsive to the public while at the same time it adopted an increasingly critical tone toward higher education, calling colleges "complacent, resistant to change, and sometimes downright lazy" (Field 2005).

One method of achieving such transparency, the Commission argued in its December 2005 meeting, would be to measure an institution's "value add" via a standardized test taken by college students. Not only did the Commission take a stand on the use of standardized testing in higher education, it also initially considered the idea of tying an institution's eligibility for federal student aid (and even a college's accreditation) pursuant to such testing. Noteworthy for the public debate that this would ignite was the mention and suggestion of a candidate for such a national test: The Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), a general skills test developed by the RAND Corporation and the Council for Aid to Education (CAE). Mr. Miller was already quite familiar with the CLA because during his chairmanship of the University of Texas regents, all the four-year institutions in the University of Texas system adopted the CLA, and the results were

incorporated into the Texas accountability system and publicly reported. Mr. Miller had also served as a board member of the nonprofit Council for Aid to Education (CAE), the developer of the CLA, as had Sara Martinez Tucker, another Commission member.

The creation of the "Spellings Commission," as it became known, was often the topic of conversation in higher education circles. Higher education media outlets, as well as higher education member associations, administrators, and faculty were abuzz. The Commission's report, *A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education*, was released in September 2006. In a section addressing the need for transparency and accountability, the report read:

> We believe that improved accountability is vital to ensuring the success of all the other reforms we propose. Colleges and universities must become more transparent about cost, price, and student success outcomes, and must willingly share this information with students and families. Student achievement, which is inextricably connected to institutional success, must be measured by institutions on a "value-added" basis that takes into account students' academic baseline when assessing their results. This information should be made available to students, and reported publicly in aggregate form to provide consumers and policymakers an accessible, understandable way to measure the relative effectiveness of different colleges and universities (p. 4).

This final report retreated from recommending standardized testing to encouraging a general environment of accountability and recommending the voluntary use of assessments, such as the CLA (highlighted on page 22 of the Commission's report), as a way to hold institutions accountable for student learning. The report pointed out that faculty must be at the fore of defining students' educational objectives and developing measures to capture this.

The Spellings Commission initially suggested that it would use accreditation agencies as levers for institutional change—particularly in enforcing the need for institutions to measure SLO—by altering federal rules governing the accreditation

process. But Secretary Spellings, with pressure from Congress, backed down from this stance, as evidenced in her remarks in December 2007 to the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity as this group commenced to review the renewal requests for accrediting authority from the accreditation organizations.

Regardless of federal pressure, regional accrediting agencies have focused more on SLO in recent years as part of the accreditation process. While accrediting agencies first incorporated SLO in 1989, when federal regulations required this (Brint 2001), they have placed more focus on SLO in recent years as part of the accreditation process and are encouraging institutions to post the data publicly.

In an article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Glenn 2011), Robert Mundhenk, a Visiting Scholar at the Higher Learning Commission (one of six regional postsecondary institution accreditors in the United States), spoke about the role of accrediting agencies in encouraging institutions to make assessment data more public: "… you can see now that the accrediting agencies are providing colleges with assistance in translating their internal data into something that's more public. And I think we'll see more of that."

As a result, more and more higher education institutions—92 percent, according to a national survey of provosts and chief academic officers (Kuh and Ikenberry 2009)—are engaged in institution-level assessments of student learning, of which 39 percent are using some kind of standardized test of general knowledge like the CLA. When asked what is driving the assessment movement in higher education, the top three most influential forces cited by respondents in this survey were expectations of regional accreditors, expectations of specialized accreditors, and the institution's commitment to

improvement (Kuh and Ikenberry 2009:21). However, community colleges and two-year institutions conferred more importance on these first two drivers than baccalaureate institutions, which placed more importance on campus commitment to "improvement." On the subject of faculty involvement and support of SLO assessment, 66 percent of respondents stated that more faculty engagement would be helpful in assessing SLO, with about four-fifths of provosts at doctoral research universities reporting greater faculty engagement as their number one challenge (Kuh and Ikenberry 2009:25).

While some held the viewpoint that the Commission's report, like similar reports before it, would pass quietly into the night after the initial furor, the national conversation around developing a system of measuring SLO and determining an institution's "value add" gained momentum. As the Commission held its meetings from 2005 to 2006, several national higher education associations also turned their attention toward the issues of accountability and assessment. The Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU)—formerly known as the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC)—the nation's oldest higher education organization, partnered with the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) to create their own Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) in order to move away from anything that looked federally mandated.

If higher education institutions were feeling increased pressure from stakeholders outside of the institution to be more transparent, then the VSA provided a way for stakeholders inside the institution to respond proactively. On its website, the VSA lists the following as its objectives:

- Demonstrate accountability and stewardship to public;

- Support institutions in the measurement of educational outcomes and facilitate the identification and implementation of effective practices as part of institutional improvement efforts;
- Assemble and disseminate information that is transparent, comparable, and understandable; and
- Provide a useful tool for students during the college search process.

Retrieved March 28, 2013 (http://www.voluntarysystem.org/about)

One of the primary activities under this voluntary system was the development of an online database, a "College Portrait" of each participating institution that would contain the same data elements. College Portrait launched online in 2009, and includes a section for each institution to report SLO. Participating institutions are invited to post their results on any of the three VSA-approved SLO assessments: The CLA administered by the Council for Aid to Education, the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) administered by ACT, and the Proficiency Profile (formerly the Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress) administered by ETS.

In addition to the efforts of APLU and AASCU, private higher education institutions have also tried to be leaders on accountability. The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), a non-profit membership association representing over 600 small and mid-sized independent colleges and universities, created a consortium of 33 of its members in 2005 (eventually growing to 57 members by fall 2010) to use the CLA on their respective campuses and to work with the developers of the CLA on the ways in which assessment can be used in colleges to improve teaching and learning practices. Finally, the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU) developed a similar version of "College Portrait" called "U-CAN"—the University and College Accountability Network. Additionally, since the Spellings Commission report in 2006, at least five national organizations have been created with a focus of promoting the

development of SLO to be used to improve student learning. As Carol Schneider, President of the Association of American Colleges and Universities put it: ". . . the threshold question of whether to assess has, rightly, begun to give way to the questions of what to assess and how to assess" (Schneider 2002:3).

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment and the Collegiate Learning Assessment

With so much national attention and discussion given to student learning outcomes (SLO) assessment in the past decade, this section describes SLO assessment in more detail. But first, what is a SLO? Broadly speaking, learning outcomes "clearly state the expected knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies, and habits of mind that students are expected to acquire at an institution of higher education" (Retrieved 4/1/15, http://www.learningoutcomesassessment.org). Here is an example of an institution-wide SLO on creative and critical thinking from Portland State University: "Students will develop the disposition and skills to strategize, gather, organize, create, refine, analyze, and evaluate the credibility of relevant information and ideas" (Retrieved 4/1/15, http://www.pdx.edu/institutional-assessment-council).

SLO assessment is increasingly being touted in higher education policy circles as an instrument to hold institutions more accountable. The CLA is a kind of SLO assessment, but more specifically, it is a value-added assessment (VAA). Generally described, VAA is a form of SLO assessment that shifts the focus away from examining individual student performance, particularly in the evaluation of subject-specific knowledge; rather, VAA emphasizes the institution and how it has contributed to the student's overall progress in the development of higher-order thinking skills. For example, the CLA purports to address general skills such as critical thinking, analytic reasoning,

and written communication. The unit of analysis is the institution rather than the student. Some critics of VAA view that making the institution the unit of analysis is a means to evaluate and exert control over the professoriate (Broadfoot 1996). And faculty in institutions might consider this kind of assessment a threat because it evaluates their teaching abilities.

One of the most prominent SLO assessments to date is the CLA. With endorsements not only from the U.S. Department of Education but also from national higher education organizations like the Association of American Colleges and Universities, the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, and the Council of Independent Colleges, the CLA has received much attention since it launched in 2004.

The concept for the CLA first emerged in 2000, when the Annapolis Group—an organization of leading independent liberal arts colleges—convened in Maryland for their annual meeting. There, one of the sessions focused on the question: how do you begin to measure a postsecondary institution's value add to student learning? Two participants in this session represented the Council for Aid to Education (CAE).

On the heels of the meeting of the Annapolis Group, CAE—then a New York City-based subsidiary of the RAND Corporation—launched a pilot project in fall 2000 to address the issue of assessing the quality of undergraduate education by measuring its impact on students. Initially called the "Value-Added Assessment Initiative" (VAAI), the project would later be renamed the "Collegiate Learning Assessment" (CLA). The project's objective was "to create a model and an incentive for the continuous improvement of higher education as well as to create measures of quality that all the major stakeholders—university administrators, faculty, students, parents, employers, and

policymakers—can use as part of their evaluation of the quality of academic programs nationwide" (Benjamin and Hersh 2002:7). Initial funding came from a consortium of major foundations: the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Ford Foundation, Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation, and William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

The CLA does not focus on testing discipline-specific content, but rather on evaluating the mastery of general education skills—critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving abilities, and written communication (Shavelson 2010). The tasks in the CLA are not multiple-choice, but are designed for open-ended responses. There are two components of the CLA, and in its matrix-sampling approach, students are randomly selected to take either: (1) a 90-minute Performance Task that presents the student with a "real-life" problem scenario with accompanying documents and then asks the student to answer several short-answer, essay questions; or (2) a 45-minute "Make an Argument" essay and a 30-minute "Critique an Argument" essay (sample CLA test prompts are in Appendix A). It debuted in 2004 and its adoption by four-year, not-for-profit higher education institutions has been modest. In the 2010-2011 academic year, for example, out of 1,587 four-year, not-for-profit institutions across the nation, 184 institutions administered the CLA (Council for Aid to Education 2011).[1] In the 2011-2012 academic year, 161 institutions administered the CLA (Council for Aid to Education 2012).

A typical CLA test administration cycle for an institution consists of testing up to 100 first year students in early fall and up to 100 exiting seniors in the spring the following semester. Once testing is complete for the academic year, each institution receives an Institutional Report in the summer. The CLA employs a value-added

[1] Ten community colleges and 75 independent high schools also participated in the CLA that year.

estimation approach because "simply comparing average achievement of all schools tends to paint selective institutions in a favorable light and discount the educational efficacy of schools admitting students from weaker academic backgrounds" (Council for Aid to Education 2012:4). Therefore, the value-added modeling approach provides the institution with scores that "can be interpreted as relative to institutions testing students of similar academic ability" (p. 4). When seniors from an institution on average perform better than expected, then according to the CLA, the institution has high value added. Value-added scores for institutions are reported as "well below expected," "below expected," "near expected," "above expected," and "well above expected."

Faculty Response to the Collegiate Learning Assessment

Endorsement from a few national member associations, a spate of media attention, and participation by a relatively small percentage of higher education institutions does not indicate that the CLA has been embraced by the higher education community. In fact, as SLO assessments gain traction, so too does skepticism and suspicion of them, particularly among higher education faculty. To date, scant attention has been paid to the faculty response to SLO assessment, and little has been written on the role faculty should play in such assessments. The press has tended to depict extreme positions taken by faculty: the faculty have either joined with the university administration as supporters of SLO assessment or been vocal dissenters.

To illustrate, I provide you briefly with two disparate faculty responses to the CLA. In 2007, the Chancellor of the California State University system mandated that all twenty-three institutions implement the CLA. It should be noted that the Chancellor, Charles Reed, was (and continues to serve in 2015) a board member of the CAE, the

developer of the CLA. Several of the senior-level administrators given responsibility for implementing the CLA on their campuses remarked at a 2007 San Francisco meeting with CLA representatives (I was one of the CLA representatives in attendance) that they faced challenges in recruiting students when they could not obtain faculty buy-in. The strongest recorded response from the system emerged out of Chico State University, where the Academic Senate issued a resolution on May 10, 2007 (retrieved online fall 2007, http://www.csuchico.edu) stating its specific concerns with the administration of the CLA on its campus and that the decision for its adoption was made without "the consultation or approval of the faculty." Therefore, the resolution continued, the Senate "respectfully opposes the use of the Collegiate Learning Assessment on our campus under these circumstances."

In contrast, Augustana College, a small liberal arts, religiously-affiliated institution, formally weaved faculty involvement into SLO assessment in the mid-1990s, when it created its first committee on assessment: the Assessment Review Committee (Provezis 2011). Since then, the committee has worked with each of the departments to review and refine assessment activities, and sees them as integral to improving teaching and learning. The CLA is only one of many assessment activities on campus, and the results of the CLA are posted on the institution's website. As the Academic Dean says, "assessment permeates the college."

These two examples reveal the tensions between perceiving assessment as a tool for external accountability versus perceiving assessment as a tool for internal improvement. Gary Rhoades, the general secretary of the American Association of University Professors (from 2008-2011), addressed the potential for increased tension,

faculty anxiety, and resistance if accountability is emphasized over improvement, especially since he believes that "assessment of student learning and reform of teaching and academic programs are core academic activities," the "primary responsibility of faculty—individually and collectively" (Gold, Rhoades, Smith, and Kuh 2011:7). Implicit in this concern is that if assessment for accountability holds sway, then non-faculty (e.g., administrators) in postsecondary institutions will control the activity instead.

Problem Statement and Rationale

One focus of the current accountability and assessment movement in higher education is the call for postsecondary institutions, particularly bachelor's degree-granting colleges and universities, to measure and report SLO. Higher education institutions are finding it difficult to ignore this push as external agencies such as accreditation organizations and state agencies such as coordinating boards and legislatures use the regulatory process to advocate this form of accountability. A 2009 study by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) at the University of Illinois examined the incorporation of assessment instruments at accredited, undergraduate-degree-granting two- and four-year public, private, and for-profit institutions. It found that 92 percent of respondents (n=2,809 provosts and chief academic officers) said that they were engaged in institution-level assessments of student learning, and 39 percent of these institutions were using some kind of standardized test of general knowledge like the CLA (Kuh and Ikenberry 2009). Many respondents in the study claimed that accreditation was the primary driver of their interest in assessment.

But there seems to be a secondary reason for assessment, articulated by external and internal groups—not only for reporting purposes but also for using the data to reform

teaching and academic programs on campus. Thus it becomes important to understand faculty response to such standardized, SLO assessments. If SLO assessments like the CLA are to be used not only for public accountability purposes but also to influence academic programs, then it leads to the issue of jurisdiction—under whose authority the assessment falls. Consequently, an important question missing from the NILOA survey is to what extent faculty are involved or are aware of institution-level SLO assessment.

Because the CLA was initially introduced and administered on many campuses by campus administrators, it can be (and has been) perceived by many faculty as a direct challenge to faculty autonomy and expertise (Brint 2011; Ginsberg 2011). In recent years, writers in the field of SLO assessment have urged faculty to take the lead on conversations of accountability and assessment and to take control over how assessment is utilized on their campuses (Gold et al. 2011; Hersh 2005). In May 2011, representatives of the three faculty unions—the Higher Education Department of the American Federation of Teachers, the American Association of University Professors, and the National Education Association—issued a paper where they affirmed the importance of assessment and did not oppose the use of assessment information for accountability, but they asserted the "central role" faculty must have and stated that "faculty involvement in assessment is essential in order to insure that the principles of academic freedom and shared governance are honored in all phases of the assessment process" (Gold et al. 2011:3). This was the first time that groups representing faculty responded formally to the growing conversation around accountability and assessment in higher education.

The voices of university faculty remain largely unheard, at least beyond the confines of the institution itself, in discussions of accountability and SLO assessment. This is not necessarily because faculty are silent on the topic but more likely because their response has not been systematically explored and analyzed. Yet, because the faculty is a key constituent group in higher education, understanding faculty response and the key causal factors of the response to SLO assessment in an age of (renewed) accountability is critical.

Statement of Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this multi-case study was to examine collective faculty response to the CLA at several U.S. bachelor's degree-granting institutions. By examining faculty response to SLO assessment on campuses—specifically the CLA—I wanted to explore the key causal factors driving faculty response. By uncovering these factors, I hoped to expand our understanding of the professorial profession in this era of accountability and assessment: how they perceive accountability and assessment impacting their profession, their identity as professors, and their role in the institution.

Therefore, I asked the following research question: Why does collective faculty response to student learning outcomes assessments like the Collegiate Learning Assessment vary among undergraduate institutions? In asking this central question, I subsequently asked two sub-questions: (a) How do faculty understand the aim of student learning outcomes assessments like the CLA?; and (b) How do faculty perceive this kind of assessment impacting their role as professors?

While there are several SLO assessments currently in use by postsecondary institutions, I focused my research on the CLA for several reasons: (1) it has received

more media attention than competing assessments and thus may be more familiar to those in higher education; (2) it was highlighted by the Spellings Commission and is recognized (and formally endorsed) by major higher education member associations; and (3) the CLA is of personal interest to me as I worked at CAE (from 2003-2009) on the CLA: helping to launch the CLA in 2004, maintaining relationships with institutions implementing the CLA, overseeing test administration, developing and managing the scoring of the CLA, and co-creating the CLA in the Classroom Performance Task Academy, a professional development workshop for faculty.

Significance

Currently, one of the major policy issues in higher education articulated by external stakeholder groups (e.g., state and federal legislators, accreditation groups) is a renewed advocacy of accountability, particularly accountability that incorporates the measurement and public reporting of SLO. Since the Spellings Commission's 2006 report, proponents for increased accountability have pushed forward an agenda that promotes the use of standardized assessments—SLO assessments such as the CLA—as an appropriate tool to measure how much students have gained in higher-order thinking skills as a result of their attendance at a particular higher education institution. This advocacy is often generated by the belief that higher education institutions as a whole are not doing enough to educate students.

Rather than losing steam, the topic of higher education accountability is hitting the popular mainstream. In 2011, Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa's book, *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*, made an impact outside of higher education circles when it used data from the CLA to examine student learning outcomes,

finding minimal gains in student learning. Richard Hersh, a former co-director of the CLA, made an appearance on *The Colbert Report* show in April 2012 to promote his latest book which claims that higher education is not doing enough to educate students. And David Brooks, in his April 19, 2012 column in *The New York Times*, promoted the necessity of value-added assessments to hold higher education institutions more accountable.

Given all that has been written and publicly discussed on the topic, the faculty role in, and response to, SLO assessment and accountability has been overlooked. Beyond a few anecdotes, there is little known about collective faculty response within institutions to SLO assessment. In studying this phenomenon, I believe I have contributed to an expanded understanding of the professoriate—about the challenges and changes the profession faces, how this impacts their perception of their role within the institution, and how they voice and assert their role in the institution. This study also provides us with policy implications of the viability of using SLO assessment as a form of public accountability and as a strategy to improve teaching and learning. Finally, understanding how faculty collectively voice and assert themselves on college campuses gives us a deeper understanding of how higher education institutions function and the relationship amongst key players within the organizations.

Organization of the Dissertation

In Chapter II, I examine three broad fields of literature: (1) organizational theory, specifically collegial and bureaucratic models of organization; (2) professionalization theory within the sociology of professions; and (3) general trends describing the U.S. higher education academic profession.

In Chapter III, I describe my qualitative case study design, the sample, data collection and analysis, and the researcher perspective.

In Chapters IV, V, and VI, I present my findings from each of the five institutions that agreed to participate in my study: Stamper College, Grant State University, Redeemer College, University of Carlow, and Morrisville University. Each of these case studies revealed compelling stories of faculty working in higher education today and how their professorial role and identity shape their understanding of SLO assessment and influence their response to the CLA.

Finally, in Chapter VII, I synthesize and analyze the findings from across the five institutions and present five claims that lead me to answer my research question of why collective faculty response to student learning outcomes assessments like the Collegiate Learning Assessment varies among undergraduate institutions. I then discuss the implications for the theory and to policy, present limitations of the study, and suggest directions for further research. I conclude with a final reflection on the study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The purpose of this multi-case study was to examine collective faculty response to the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) at several U.S. bachelor's degree-granting postsecondary institutions. By examining faculty response to student learning outcomes (SLO) assessment on campuses—specifically the CLA—I wanted to explore the key causal factors driving faculty response. By uncovering these factors, I hoped to expand our understanding of the professorial profession in this age of accountability and assessment: how they perceive accountability and assessment impacting their profession, their identity as professors, and their role in the institution.

Therefore, I asked the following research question: Why does collective faculty response to student learning outcomes assessments like the Collegiate Learning Assessment vary among undergraduate institutions? In asking this central question, I subsequently asked two sub-questions: (a) How do faculty understand the aim of student learning outcomes assessments like the CLA?; and (b) How do faculty perceive this kind of assessment impacting their role as professors?

To begin to address these research questions, I reviewed the following literature: (1) organizational theory—specifically collegial and bureaucratic models of organizations, two lenses of organizational structure that provide a way to analyze the pattern of relation and interaction among groups in colleges and universities; (2) the sociology of professions—specifically, the concept of how professions establish, maintain and/or address challenges to "jurisdictional boundaries," the connections between the profession

and its work; and (3) the U.S. higher education academic profession—examining broadly the parameters of academic identity and its culture (its shared values, beliefs, and attitudes), contemporary changes occurring within the profession and how this impacts the relationship the faculty have to the institution and to other actors (namely administrators) in the institution.

A review of the literature guided the development of a conceptual framework, presented at the end of this chapter, for understanding collective faculty response to SLO assessment.

Organizational Theory

In this section, I present two, prevailing models of higher education organizations—collegial and bureaucratic—from the literature.[2] While no one organization fits wholly and neatly into one or the other, and most are likely to have some elements of both, using models to understand organizations helps clarify how the organization functions (Birnbaum 1988). In addition, since my project explored how different stakeholder groups within an organization have a working understanding of how their institution functions (or how they desire it to function), it is important to outline these models.

Next, I describe how faculty apply a cognitive framework to guide their role within it and their expectations of other groups' roles. I elucidate potential areas of conflict, particularly with other constituent groups in the organization who might have a

[2] There are certainly other models of organization that are offered such as the political model and corporate model, but for the purposes of my study, I focused on the collegial and the bureaucratic. With the exception of one institution in my study, participants in four of the participating institutions consistently described their institution in either collegial or bureaucratic terms.

markedly different understanding of how the institution functions and therefore apply a different cognitive framework to the roles of the groups within it.

Collegial and Bureaucratic Models of Organization

One of the most pervasive models for understanding the university as an organization is the collegial model. The collegial model represents an ideal-type in which an informal hierarchy exists, the source of power is often based on professional expertise rather than official position, there is in place an informal communication system amongst a community of scholars, administrators and faculty consider each other equals, and decisions are made via group consensus (Austin and Gamson 1983; Birnbaum 1988). Under this conceptualization, knowledge is considered a public good, and the triumvirate of teaching, research, and service are upheld while academic freedom is held sacrosanct.

In this model, the professional community of scholar-teachers interacts informally and focuses on consensus-based decision-making and open discussion. Faculty bring expectations of shared governance to their workplace (Gumport 1997). "Democratic" and "egalitarian" are often used to describe the collegial institution. Size also matters. An important consideration for the maintenance of a collegial form is that the institution be comparatively small (Birnbaum 1988). In larger, public institutions, faculty expectations of a collegial form may be disappointed (Gumport 1997). However, this does not preclude faculty in large institutions from having expectations for the institution or experiencing the institution, despite its size, to operate as a collegium; or, that faculty in small institutions do not experience their institution as a collegial one. It is the possibility of such dissonance and its implications that I was interested in exploring.

Because the source of power in the collegial model is often based on professional expertise rather than official position, university administrators are expected to have a limited, supportive role and are considered subordinate to faculty.

> …the administration is understood to be subordinate to the collegium and carries out the collegium's will. Administrators are often members of the faculty who agree to serve for a limited time and then return to their classroom responsibilities. Administrators therefore tend to be "amateurs," rather than professionals (Birnbaum 1988:89).

The institution, in fact, exists to serve the individuals in it rather than the other way around. The collegial institution has a close-knit community that retains a "strong and coherent culture with distinctive symbols, rites, and myths" due to the "common backgrounds, continuing interaction, a long tradition" (Birnbaum 1988:91). In fact, in the collegial community, because groups interact in work and non-work activities, as their mutual regard for one another increases, so too does the frequency of their interactions, resulting in shared norms (Birnbaum 1988). Some argued, such as Philip Altbach (2005), that the collegial model is not only antiquated but that it never really existed:

> Professorial myths—of collegial decision making, individual autonomy, and the disinterested pursuit of knowledge—have come into conflict with the realities of complex organizational structures and bureaucracies. Important academic decisions are reviewed by a bewildering assortment of committees and administrators. These levels of authority have become more powerful as arbiters of academic decision making (p. 296).

Altbach offered up instead the bureaucratic model.

In contrast to the collegial model, the bureaucratic model depicts an organization structured to meet its goals as efficiently as possible; it is hierarchical and governed by authority and legal rationality, and compensation and promotion are based on formal assessment. Often, large-sized institutions are characterized as bureaucratic rather than their smaller-sized counterparts. As an institution expands, there are an increasing

number of sub-units, which are highly specialized, resulting in decreased interaction amongst groups. Decreased informal interaction is replaced by formal interaction, leading to increased bureaucracy where rules and regulations mediate the interaction rather than shared norms (Birnbaum 1988). The verticality of many institutions' organizational charts speaks to this more formalized process of accountability and authority. Those who control the material resources often wield authority; this authority is more likely to be in the hands of top-level administrators rather than those who have expert subject-matter knowledge. Austin and Gamson (1983) argued that changes occurring in the higher education system are increasingly leading institutions away from the collegial model toward this Weberian model, which I will address in greater detail later in this chapter in discussing the growth of the university administration.

Other theorists describe the bureaucratic model as a structural frame or rational system framework—the institution is organized as a hierarchical bureaucracy where the functions of the organization are organized to work cohesively in the pursuit of clear production goals (Bolman and Deal 2003). A division of labor advances efficiency while the hierarchy (exemplified by the organizational chart) is based on one's expertise and skills. Hence, the organization gathers data under the assumption that data can lead to its operational efficiency and effectiveness. For example, under this framework universities collect assessment data, such as the type the CLA provides, with the intention of using the results to improve SLO by impacting curricular design and influencing pedagogy. Some faculty might be concerned that the assessment data could also be used to measure a professor's technical competence and performance. Thus, of concern to faculty is that

assessment activity is not under the control and authority of faculty but rather rests under an administrative arm of the university.

Cognitive Frameworks in Conflict

In recent decades, as higher education institutions have responded to external pressures for more accountability (e.g. to provide performance data to state legislatures), they have expanded their infrastructure and added administrators to oversee the activity. As a result, administrators have grown in numbers and prominence on campuses, wielding greater decision-making authority within the institution. According to reporting by *The Wall Street Journal*, "the number of employees hired by colleges and universities to manage or administer people, programs and regulations increased 50% faster than the number of instructors between 2001 and 2011" (Belkin and Thurm 2012:A1). Altbach described academics working in large bureaucratic organizations as employees yet also as professionals within an infrastructure of collegial self-government, resulting in academics feeling "increasingly alienated from their institutions" (Altbach 2005:295).

As a result, a body of research emerges that applies collegial and bureaucratic models of organization to collegial and bureaucratic mindsets, or cognitive frameworks, of groups within the organization. Peterson and White's (1992) literature review of conflicting views of the organizational context concluded the following: "(1) that there are faculty and administrator differences on many separate organizational variables, (2) that these differing perspectives occur in all institutional types, (3) that there are differences by institutional type, and (4) that those differences may be counterproductive" (p. 179).

The emergence of a dualism in the organizational structure of the university is observed: faculty and administrators occupying separate, not often interconnecting, spheres with a two-tiered system of authority—administrative authority and professional authority (Birnbaum 1988; Corson 1960; Etzioni 1964; Geiger 2004). In regard to this two-tiered system of authority, Geiger (2004) contended that the dual structure of authority in the university—consensual authority which flows upward from the bottom of the organization and fiscal control flowing downward from the top—results in conflict between the two groups. Though this top-down process of decision-making concerns faculty, it may be related to institutional type. In a report on the American faculty, Schuster and Finkelstein (2006) wrote that "[a]dministration and institutional management remains the single very widespread area of concern for most faculty . . . among institutional types, liberal arts colleges are the exceptions: their faculties actually report increased satisfaction with administrative leadership and thereby stand out from the pack" (Schuster and Finkelstein 2006:144).

A different interpretation from the dualistic authority structure is Gumport's argument that different institutional logics are at work in the university (Gumport in Brint, ed. 2002). One, industry logic, is heavily influenced by the bureaucratic model of institutions, where the shapers of knowledge are markets, and managers are at the helm; the other, social institution logic, is shaped by the collegial model of institutions, where the shapers of knowledge are disciplines, with faculty driving change and continuity.

Both Geiger and Gumport suggested that the co-existence of two different authorities and logics results in conflict. "Faculty show little respect for administrators and resist accepting them as full members of the academic community" (Austin and

Gamson 1983:57) and one reason is that the relationship between these two groups was never organizationally defined and so conflict was evident (Austin and Gamson 1982 drawing on Anselm 1980). If faculty uphold a social institution logic, but find themselves in an institution with a prevailing industry logic, then this dissonance might contribute to tensions between faculty and administrators and conflicts over role and authority (McConnell and Mortimer 1971).

Similar to the concept of logics, Noel Tichy (1983) wrote that different managers (or constituent groups) in an organization may not only have different views, but may have different "implicit (organizational) models" of how their institutions function (quoted in Peterson and White 1992). These implicit models guide perception and when different groups carry different models in the same organization, it results in different approaches to resolving differences (Peterson and White 1992). In an example drawn from Peterson and White (1992):

> For example, if administrators have a hierarchical, rational model, they may assume that obtaining board approval (authoritative power) and rationally distributing salary increments (financial rewards) may enhance faculty commitment to the enterprise. Faculty, on the other hand, may have a professional collegial mode assuming that peer agreement (consensual power) and recognition (professional status) may enhance their commitment (p. 178).

Estela Mara Bensimon (1987), in a discussion of frame analysis amongst college presidents, also noted the importance of recognizing groups' multiple "cognitive frames" or different implicit models of how their institutions function—bureaucratic, collegial, political, and symbolic frame. She found that "[leaders] who incorporated elements of several frames are likely to be more flexible in responding to different administrative tasks because they are able to enact different images of the organization and provide different interpretations of events" (quoted from Peterson and White 1992).

In the growing struggle between professional, occupational control and bureaucratic-managerial control in the university, Brint (2008) argued that in the specific realm of higher education teaching (one area of the profession that is targeted by the increased public and political interest in SLO assessments), the scale is tilting toward bureaucratic-managerial control. One strategy employed by faculty to stay detached from administrators' activities and oversight is "decoupling"—a concept derived from Meyer and Rowan's "The Structure of Educational Organizations" (1978) that describes decoupling happening when ritual classifications, which serve to maintain that the organization is functioning properly, are divorced from instruction and outcomes. Through decoupling, faculty try to keep inviolate their academic (technical) core of teaching. But the assessment movement and administrators' aims to introduce national assessments on campuses intrudes on to this technical core, resulting in conflict between the two groups (Brint 2008; Ginsberg 2011).

Understanding the faculty's cognitive framework of the organization in which they work assists us in understanding how faculty understand and assert their collective identity as professors within the organization, and how this understanding shapes their interaction with other groups (particularly administrators) within the organization.

Sociology of Professions

In this section, I focus on the literature from the sociology of professions: namely professionalization theory, which looks at groups seeking to establish, monopolize and maintain their spheres of expertise (Freidson 1970; Larson 1977; Macdonald 1995), and the systems model of professions, which conceptualizes professions as a dynamic and competitive system where groups dispute jurisdictional boundaries (Abbott 1988;

Rhoades 1998). While the former relies on the concept of power, the latter focuses on the qualities of the work. I rely on an examination of this body of literature to help me better understand the potential power dynamics among groups in the university and the interplay between the profession (faculty as a group) and its work (faculty work).

Professionalization Theory

The study of professions, following the emergence of professions in the nineteenth century, examines how modern societies have sought to institutionalize and organize expertise. Much of the evidence the literature draws on is captured from the three "classical" professions: medicine, law, and, to a lesser extent, divinity. Over time, the literature in this field evolved from the development of a definition of "profession"—an occupational organization—to "professionalization"—the process whereby an occupation becomes a profession.

Andrew Abbott (1988) detailed the development of the literature of professionalization theory from naturalism to theory and outlines four different sociological approaches that writers have taken: (1) Functionalist, (2) Structuralist, (3) Monopolist, and (4) Culturalist. These categories are helpful in organizing the historical and theoretical development of professionalization theory.

The early theorists focused on identifying the traits of professionalization, on definition-creation, and classification primarily through case studies (Caplow 1954; Carr-Saunders and Wilson 1933; Greenwood 1957 from Vollmer and Mills, eds. 1966; Millerson 1964). The classic study is A. M. Carr-Saunders and P. A. Wilson's work, *The Professions* (1933), which identified the traits that determine whether an occupation qualifies as a profession. While this trait-based approach was used to examine

occupations ranging from social work (Greenwood 1957 from Vollmer and Mills, eds. 1966), to industrial technology (Vollmer and Mills 1962), to librarianship (Goode 1961), and even professional theft (Sutherland 1937), this line of mainly descriptive research was soon supplanted by works in the early 1970s that focused on the *process* of professionalization, particularly on the role of professional power and control.

Before moving on to the literature focusing on the process of professionalization, I would like to mention other functionalists' approach to the study of profession. In *The Division of Labor and Society*, Durkheim (1893) viewed the integration of modern industrial society to be achieved by "organic solidarity," interdependency through the highly specialized division of labor. Work was organized to serve the needs of clients and society (Rhoades 1998). Similarly, Talcott Parsons (1954) outlined a functional interchange, whereby the separate parts worked together—they related to one another and came together. Professional power was based on the profession's expertise.

Unlike the functionalists, the structuralists dissolved functions and looked at the structure alone. They focused on the *process* of professionalization, outlining a sequence to the development of professionalization, and arguing that professionalization developed in a common pattern. By taking the perspective that profession was a form of occupational organization and control, their research questions explored why there is such diversity in the properties of professions. The ensuing research led them to see that professions were in different stages of professionalization.

Professionalization theory proposes that professions grow in a sequential series of stages and assumes that this pattern is common. Each stage represents groups seeking to secure and maintain monopolies over defined areas of expertise. These groups, as some

professionalization theorists argue, are motivated by self-interest and the maintenance of autonomy. Harold Wilensky (1964) argued that events toward profession-making tended to fall in a particular order, but he did not offer a clear mechanism that allowed movement from one step to the next; nor was the subject of the narrative story clear. Theodore Caplow (1954) laid out a sequence of functions: exclusion, assertion of jurisdiction, internal control and external relations (Abbott 1988:11) while maintaining the profession as the subject throughout, and keeping the links from one sequence to the other as functional. On the other hand, Geoffrey Millerson (1964) rejected Caplow's orderly sequence, instead arguing for several different possibilities (for different theories of action) for the development of the work into professionalization. While Caplow saw a more orderly progression of the profession that began with the establishment of a professional association, Millerson entertained the notion that not all associations began with the premise of a profession attempting to obtain professional status.

Monopolists recognized the structural developments of a profession but differed substantially from the structuralists in that they saw these developments not as "natural" occurrences, but rather as moves in a quest for dominance or authority. They veered away from looking merely at the forms of professionalization, and instead sought to reveal the functions of these forms. Two of the most prominent theorists in this focus on professional power are Eliot Freidson and Magali Larson.

Writing *The Profession of Medicine: A Study of the Sociology of Applied Knowledge* in 1970, Eliot Freidson offered two problems for analysis: (1) How is the profession's autonomy and self-direction developed, organized, and maintained? (This is the problem of social organization.); and (2) What is the relationship of the profession's

knowledge and procedures to the lay world? (This is the problem of sociology of knowledge.) Using the field of medicine as a case study, he argued that a detailed analysis of the field would allow him to "demonstrate the usefulness of seeing the profession as a kind of occupational organization in which a certain state of mind thrives and which, by virtue of its authoritative position in society, comes to transform if not actually create the substance of its own work" (p. xix).

Freidson's work detailed the formal characteristics of a profession. "In the most elementary sense, the profession is a group of people who perform a set of activities which provide them with the major source of their subsistence—activities which are called 'work' rather than 'leisure' and 'vocation' rather than 'avocation' " (p. 71). Most importantly, professions have legitimate, organized autonomy—with control over their work. Outside evaluation can be declared by the profession as "illegitimate and intolerable" (p. 72). Additionally, professions are distinguished by their protection and patronage from the dominant elite; they have established relationships with lay clientele. Thus, Freidson highlighted autonomy and dominance as two key characteristics of the profession, these being the only real important and uniform criteria for separating the true profession from other occupations (e.g., the doctor versus the paramedic).

Where I would challenge Freidson is his position of circumstances under which a profession's prestige remains unaffected. That is, Freidson's claim that when the profession faces some loss of control to the state over the social and economic organization of its work (while evaluation over the technical aspects of the work remains untouched), professional autonomy remains intact and thus the profession retains its status. I think this will not hold upon examination of the academic profession because

you have, of course, faculty who work in public higher education institutions who are therefore employees of the state.

Magali Larson (1977) explicitly emphasized the role of power in the professions. Professions, in Larson's view, are groups deliberately in pursuit of intellectual and organizational dominance. They do this by constituting and controlling a market for their expertise—expertise that is acquired through a tightly controlled, and socially recognized, system of education and credentialing. Professions actively pursue an agenda of monopoly of expertise and so are steadily working toward elite status. Hence, professionalization moves from an economic function to an ideological function. "Professionalization is thus an attempt to translate one order of scarce resources—special knowledge and skills—into another—social and economic rewards" (p. xvii). Most significantly, because the professions underscore the importance of autonomy, which upholds and maintains professional privilege and its dominance in the market, "profession is presented, for instance, as the antithesis of bureaucracy and the bureaucratic mode of work organization" (p. xvii). Professionals cannot operate within a bureaucratic model of organization. And this will be important to consider when I examine the potential tension between collegial and bureaucratic conceptualizations of organization.

Finally, the last group of theorists to approach professionalization theory is the Culturalists. They focus on the cultural authority of the profession (Bledstein 1976; Haskell 1977, 1984), thereby returning to Parsons' interest in expertise as a social relation between the client and the expert. The emphasis here is on the individual professional rather than the profession as a whole. Culturalists emphasize the importance

of cultural legitimation and establishment of authority in the process of professionalization. For example, professionalism is important for its external consequences such as status, money, and power (Abbott 1988). Abbott (1988) came to summarize a general concept of professionalization:

> Expert, white-collar occupations evolve towards a particular structural and cultural form of occupational control. The structural form is called profession and consists of a series of organizations for association, for control and for work. (In its strong form, the professionalization concept argues that these organizations develop in a certain order.) Culturally, professions legitimate their control by attaching their expertise to values with general cultural legitimacy, increasingly the values of rationality, efficiency, and science (p. 17).

One of the shortcomings in the professionalization literature is that it often focuses on the social relationship between profession and society (or client), but fails to address the organizational struggle within the profession and amongst professions. More recent professionalization work focuses on the conflict between bureaucratization and professionalization.

Systems Model of Professions

Andrew Abbott (1988) extended the understanding of professionalization by focusing not on the profession and society (or client) but rather on the work of the professions—specifically, on their "jurisdictional boundaries." He tried to decipher how occupational groups control knowledge and skill. Unlike Rhoades, who focused on jurisdictional confrontations between professionals and their managers, Abbott focused on jurisdictional disputes between professions.

For Abbott, the key elements of a profession included the following:

- An exclusive occupational group applies somewhat abstract knowledge to particular cases;
- The "currency of competition" is the knowledge system and its degree of abstraction;

- The profession is relative since the degree of abstraction varies over time and place;
- The role of work is key to the profession, the content of work can change, and it is control over the work content that brings professions into conflict with one another (p. 8).

This last point is critical because what distinguishes Abbott's work from others' is his focus on the work rather than the structure. Therefore, the link between a profession and its work—the "jurisdiction"—is a central concept in Abbott's theory.

In focusing on jurisdictional boundaries, Abbott proposed an alternative approach to understanding professionalization: the systems model of professions. The systems model focuses not on status-seeking, but on the work itself. Abbott studied the *control* of work, which had been overlooked by earlier theorists. Thus, the systems model of professions examines struggles over jurisdiction, the link between a profession and its work, thereby taking the emphasis away from the concept of power (professionalization theory) and toward the qualities of the work. Hence, Abbott moved away from the structuralists and monopolists. He argued for a need to focus on the "fundamental fact of professional life—interprofessional competition" (p. 2).

By introducing the concept of competition into the study of professions, Abbott addressed something heretofore ignored. Earlier theorists focused too greatly on the forms—the structure—of professions, at the cost of ignoring the content and the larger situation. "Study of organizations' forms can indeed show how certain occupations control their knowledge and its application. But it cannot tell why those forms emerge when they do or why they sometimes succeed and sometimes fail. Only the study of competition can accomplish that," he wrote (p. 2). By concentrating on issues of power

and the control of expertise/knowledge, earlier theorists had neglected the crucial issue of competition.

Interprofessional competition arises because a profession challenges a competing profession's work, particularly the control of academic knowledge over the work. It is the profession's assertion that it wields abstract professional knowledge over the work that makes the profession's jurisdiction both legitimate and yet vulnerable to attack at the same time. For example, alcoholism was first defined as a moral and spiritual problem and was thus placed in the realm of the clergy; it then became defined as a medical problem, entering the domain of medicine; finally, it became defined as a legal problem, entering the domain of lawyers and law enforcement.

In the system of professions, then, professions are linked with tasks, and these tasks are not fixed to a particular profession. As such, professions are interdependent as a "move by one inevitably affects others" (Abbott 1988:86). Prior research on professions had also focused on one profession to the exclusion of others. There was little, if any, suggestion of an interconnectedness among groups. There was a de-emphasis on organizational struggles among professional groups. Abbott suggested an interdependent system of professions, where jurisdictional boundaries were fluid and thus always subject to dispute. For Abbott, it was "[w]ithin these jurisdictional disputes [where] lies the history of professions" (p. 2).

The mechanism for action, for jurisdictional dispute, is in the existence of a vacancy (either created or abolished), not necessarily in the actions of an individual. Therefore system change occurs via external sources of action, "opening or closing areas for jurisdiction" or by "existing or new professions seeking new ground" or through

changes in technologies and organizations which can create or remove professional tasks (Abbott, 1988:90). This is particularly salient for this project because external forces pressuring institutions to be more accountable for SLO creates an opportunity for a profession to take control over assessment activities, particularly those like the CLA which are used for external reporting as well as an eye toward reforming teaching and learning strategies within an institution. In addition, control over assessment activity and its potential impact on curricular design might be appealing for a growing group of university administrators, trying to gain power and prestige.

Like Abbott, Gary Rhoades also extended the understanding of professionalization by focusing not on the profession and society (or client) but on the work of the professions. But unlike Abbott, who focused on jurisdictional disputes between professions, Rhoades focused on jurisdictional confrontations between professionals and their managers. In *Managed Professionals: Unionized Faculty and Restructuring Academic Labor*, Rhoades (1998) examined the struggle between professionals and the managers of the organizations in which they work. He looked at higher education faculty (especially unionized faculty) in U.S. colleges and universities, and faculty *not* in elite research institutions. His approach led him to look at professional autonomy not as political actions serving the group's self-interest and desire for control, but rather as actions around the academic labor, the work itself.

Rhoades conducted a content analysis of 212 collective bargaining agreements for faculty in the 1990s (inclusive of about 45 percent of all faculty contracts) in unionized colleges and universities. By examining specifically competition and jurisdictional disputes between professionals and their managers in these contracts, he concluded that

academics are managed professionals and increasingly becoming so with limited involvement in decision making. In these contracts, Rhoades discovered that managers have quite a lot of discretion in restructuring academic labor. He also found that academics are in a highly stratified profession, with stratification only increasing. This stratification is important because it expands the categories of "faculty" and provides possible new workers over whom managers have more control. Another important aspect for this expansion of "nonfaculty professionals" is the challenge they pose to faculty's control of the curriculum and that they "are increasingly central to the production work of higher education" (p. 270). This is particularly salient to my project, which examines how SLO assessment is or is not in the control and domain of faculty. Thus, Rhoades found that unionization of faculty was not only to increase wages but also a means to increase faculty voice in college and university governance. The theme throughout his work is that the relationship between professional autonomy and managerial discretion is one of ongoing negotiation.

The U.S. Higher Education Academic Profession

In order to understand collective faculty response to SLO assessment, it is necessary to examine the literature that describes recent trends in the academic profession. In this section, I broadly outline the construction and maintenance of academic identity. I then examine some key changes occurring in the profession. Finally, I discuss how the growing numbers and power of administrators in higher education have led to increased tensions with the professoriate.

Academic Identity

The idealized image of the professor as a teacher-scholar is deeply rooted in the origins of the university itself. “University” is derived from the Latin *universitas magistrorum et scholarium*, roughly translated as a "community of teachers and students.” The University of Bologna—designated as the first university in the Western world and over 900-years-old—describes on its website the preeminent role of the scholar at the institution’s inception:

> By way of definition, academic activity initially involved the scholar who, motivated by a love for knowledge, decided the parameters of a field of study and rigorously explored everything falling within them. As he conducted his research the scholar imparted the results to students who freely decided to follow him, outside of the jurisdiction of any official institution of the state or church (Retrieved online: http://www.eng.unibo.it/).

In this description, the scholar is depicted as one who retains command of the academic (technical) core with autonomy from state or church.

Strains of this image of the inviolate scholar have persisted through the centuries. Becher and Trowler (2001) described the faculty as “academic tribes.” That is, the faculty has a distinct culture within academic communities, within bounded territories. In universities, individual faculty members are organized according to their departments; departments often operate as separate, yet co-existing, fiefdoms. The use of the term “culture” by the authors is deliberate; they define culture as the “sets of taken-for-granted values, attitudes and ways of behaving, which are articulated through and reinforced by recurrent practices among a group of people in a given context” (Becher and Trowler 2001:23). The disciplinary epistemology (or subject matter knowledge) is key to defining the academic culture in which faculty members operate. Through their training, their

initiation into the professoriate, and their experience of rites of passages, faculty come to share values such as academic freedom and academic duty (Rhodes 2001).

The conceptualization of the American academic as a member of a distinct profession evolved from college tutors in the second half of the nineteenth century. The process of professionalization entails an individual establishing himself/herself as a distinguished member of the profession through the possession of a specialized body of knowledge distinct from the laity. This specialized knowledge is accrued through formal, structured preparation in accredited graduate institutions. In particular, the doctorate, an approved credential of mastery that is attained through this formal, structured study, identifies the individual as an expert or authority in a specific disciplinary field. As Abbott (1988) stated, "the ability of a profession to sustain its jurisdictions lies partly in the power and prestige of its academic knowledge" and it is this academic knowledge that legitimizes the professional work (p. 54).

In addition, professors carry membership in professional organizations and associations both within their field and across fields. These organizations and associations perform a variety of self-regulatory functions such as maintaining boundaries (and jurisdictions), upholding status, and establishing and maintaining codes of conduct. For example, since expertise and autonomy are important characteristics of a profession (as described in an earlier section of this chapter), of central importance within the academic profession are the principles of academic freedom and shared governance. *Academic freedom* protects the rights of faculty to express openly their opinions without fear of reprisals. *Shared governance* assumes a role for faculty on campuses to partake in decision-making processes with regard to the operation of the institution. The

maintenance and defense of these two principles are central to the purpose of national membership organizations like the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), who advocate for their members' rights by providing assistance and advice, lobbying at the state and federal levels, and writing amicus briefs, to name a few examples.

In addition to membership organizations, faculty collectively are often represented within individual postsecondary institutions through the Faculty Senate, which serves as the primary organizational body representing faculty interests, and acts on the faculty's behalf as part of the university governing structure. Keller (1983) argues that actual decision-making power at the campus level has shifted from the Faculty Senate to the Joint Big Decisions Committee, which provides a stronger voice and role for administrators. (I will discuss the growing role of administrators later in this chapter.) And Schuster and Finkelstein (2006), in their data analysis of three decades of national faculty surveys, found that faculty felt that while their campus involvement had not declined, their influence over campus governance had.

While there may be debate on the relative power of this group to influence decision-making processes within the institution as well as on its overall effectiveness (Benjamin in Burke, ed. 2007; Ginsberg 2011), faculty senates continue to persist on campuses. In fact, according to Tierney and Minor (2003; quoted from Rothman et al. 2011), more than 90 percent of four-year colleges and universities have a faculty senate designed to participate in institutional decision-making. Birnbaum (1991) proposed that this persistence is in large part due to the critical latent functions of the senate. These functions range from serving as a symbol of institutional membership in the higher

education system, providing legitimating myth and ritual, and a representation of collective faculty commitment to professional values. It can also serve as a status provider to faculty who participate actively in it, as a forum to debate issues, and as a potential check to the administration, when necessary.

Changes in the Academic Profession—A Trend Toward De-Professionalization

The diminished role overall of faculty in shared governance is but one example of a profession undergoing significant changes. Many authors find that the general trends faced by faculty present an overall picture of increasing de-professionalization of the professoriate (Becher and Trowler 2001; Bowen and Schuster, 1986; Burgan 2006; Hermanowicz 2011; Schuster and Finkelstein 2006). This de-professionalization is often attributed to significant changes in the environment that have impacted the organization and structure of postsecondary institutions. The September 10, 2005 issue of *The Economist* posits four trends that have impacted higher education:

1. Democratization
2. Knowledge economy
3. Globalization
4. Increasing competition

These trends have contributed to the massification of higher education and the commodification of the college that have brought about a renewed interest in accountability and assessment and have impacted faculty in the workplace (Bowen and Schuster 1986; Burgan 2006; Hermanowicz 2011; Rhoades 1998; Schuster and Finkelstein 2006; Shulman 2006). I will highlight here a few of the key changes in the profession that suggest a waning of faculty power and influence in the organization, and a waxing of administrative power (Altbach 2005; Benjamin 2006; Bowen and Schuster

1986; Burgan 2006; Schuster and Finkelstein 2006). It appears that faculty are experiencing a redefinition of the faculty work role (Schuster and Finkelstein 2006).

While the professoriate is by no means a monolithic group, there is increased stratification that is straining the perceived cohesiveness of the faculty (Brint 2002). For instance, an expansion of the occupational subjects and increased academic specialization in universities suggest that the new faculty entering universities to teach these subjects are more market-oriented and hold different values and understandings than their more traditional liberal arts colleagues. Bowen and Schuster (1986) present several additional reasons for this fragmentation, including heterogeneity of the faculty themselves, increasing diversity in the higher education system, and the emphasis on research and its impact on hiring and promotion.

More revolutionary to the faculty workforce, however, is the expansion of part-time faculty. According to Schuster and Finkelstein, "…the work of Tuckman (1978) and Gappa and Leslie (1993), among others, has established that a 'contingent'—or, as the Australians call it, a 'casual'—academic workforce has exploded from the periphery of our awareness to the dead center of academic life" (2006:192). A 2006 American Association of University Professors study showed that more than 62% of all faculty members are off tenure track. What is occurring is a growing bifurcation between those who are tenure-track and those who are not. The rise in adjunct faculty results in a growing body of faculty who are alienated from traditional, tenure-track faculty, "less professionalized" (Rhoades 1998), and with fewer shared values. Thus, they are not as fully integrated into the "academic tribe," and as such, their loyalties are not necessarily adjoined with the tenured faculty.

Finally, faculty operate in an organization that is increasingly perceived as something that should be under the sway of market forces. A higher education degree is increasingly viewed as a commodity to be obtained, a private good, if you will, where the student is the consumer and the faculty is the provider of the good (Slaughter and Rhoades 2005). The university is becoming increasingly corporatized, and the concern for faculty is that as the university adopts more corporate values, as it feels public pressure to be more transparent and accountable, faculty are expected to act more and more like corporate employees (Washburn 2005). If the organization becomes more corporatized, expectations of faculty roles and responsibilities undergo change. Under the role of corporate employees, the faculty would be held more firmly accountable to measurable objectives, would undergo regular assessment and performance reviews, and have less control over curricular content. One recent manifestation of this trend toward holding faculty more accountable is the controversial cost-benefit analysis developed by Texas A&M University to evaluate the "value" of their professors by taking into consideration such factors as how much research money they bring in and how much money they generate from teaching. As a corporate ethos becomes more integrated into universities, faculty autonomy is challenged.

Where once faculty had the upper hand in the governance structure in universities—they were *de facto* the university—faculty perceive their influence in the university diminishing. Studies show the increasing dissatisfaction of faculty with their life on campus (Hermanowicz 2011; Rothman, Kelly-Woessner, and Woessner 2010). Academics feel increasingly alienated from their institutions (Massy et. al. 1994). A 1990 survey, in which two-thirds described faculty morale as fair or poor, and 60 percent had

negative feelings about the "sense of community" at their institutions, remains relevant over twenty years later (Altbach 2005:295).

The Rise of Administrators

Writing in 1971, McConnell and Mortimer observed the ascendancy of faculty power within the university over a twenty-five year period. Faculty authority, they wrote, stemmed from several sources: explicit delegation from governing boards; development of a strong sense of professionalism; the assertion and promotion of academic values; and a commitment by faculty first to their discipline and then to their institution (McConnell and Mortimer 1971). Jencks and Riesman in *The Academic Revolution* (1968) also underscored the power of the professoriate and their control over the academic core.

But in the 1970s, a shift occurred. George Keller (1983) marked this shift as a "management revolution." As administrative branches within universities responded to budgetary constraints, increasing regulatory demands, and an expanding student body by growing in size and offering more services, the university grew more complex and task differentiation expanded. There was a natural growth in bureaucratization in order to adapt to these environmental complexities (Gumport and Pusser 1995). As a result, whereas faculty were once recruited to take on temporary positions as administrators, they often did not possess the specialized knowledge necessary to administer and manage the web of federal regulations, complex management information systems, student financial aid procedures, and grant and contract administration (Birnbaum 1988). Nor did they often have the interest. Thus, the institution hired full-time administrators to apply practices of scientific management to university operations (Rourke and Brooks 1964). According to Gary Rhoades (2007), the ranks of administrators outpaced that of faculty,

growing at three times the rate of faculty from 1975 to 1985, while faculty representation fell from approximately two-thirds of all professional employees in higher education in the 1970s to 53 percent in 2000 (Arum and Roksa 2011). Arum and Roksa (2011) pointed out that the implications of this personnel change in the university are profound because it has "implicitly de-emphasized the role of faculty and faculty instruction per se at these institutions" (p. 12).

The administrators' control over strategic planning and the allocation of resources gave them increasing oversight of university operations while faculty dominance and influence in these areas waned. In addition, administrators emerged as a competing, on-campus professional group (not necessarily a unified one) who exerted influence over faculty professionals by managing salaries, eliminating or approving academic programs, deciding how many full-time and part-time faculty were hired (Rhoades 1998).

This brief profile of the academic profession illustrates that this is a profession undergoing significant change. And the accountability and assessment movement currently underway in higher education not only highlights what is happening on the profession but brings additional pressures on it. Jack Schuster (2011) wrote that this new phase for faculty "arguably constitut[es] a new paradigm for the faculty and their colleges and universities" (p. 2).

Conceptual Framework

In examining collective faculty response to SLO assessment and the factors that contribute to this response, this study explored the intersection of the accountability and assessment movement and the academic profession. In asking, "Why does collective faculty response to student learning outcomes assessment vary among undergraduate

institutions?" my research question sought insight into the following issues: how transformations occurring in the academic profession and workplace might impact faculty response to SLO assessment; how faculty perceive their role in the university and their relationship to other groups (namely administrators) in the institution; and how (through what organizational structures) faculty voice and act on these relationship dynamics and challenges to jurisdictional boundaries.

The literature presented in this chapter provided a framework for understanding collective faculty response to SLO assessment. I presented three broad fields of literature that I thought were most relevant to this study. First, I focused on organizational theory, specifically collegial and bureaucratic models of organizations. This provided me with two lenses of organizational structure that assisted me in analyzing the pattern of relation and interaction between groups in colleges and universities. Then, I discussed professionalization theory within the sociology of professions, which examines groups seeking to establish, monopolize, and maintain their spheres of expertise. Additionally, I introduced the systems model of professions, which conceptualizes professions as a dynamic and competitive system where groups establish, maintain, and/or address challenges to jurisdictional boundaries—the connective tissue between the profession and its work. While professionalization theory relies on the concept of power, the systems model of professions focuses on the qualities of the work. I considered that maybe faculty response to SLO assessment reflected a within-organization struggle over jurisdictional boundaries (e.g., curriculum and instruction), highlighting faculty tensions over perceived symbolic and literal loss of power within the institution over recent decades (e.g., weakened role in shared governance, diminished role prestige, etc.).

My literature review suggested that within the university there might be a clash of cognitive frameworks of organization at play between faculty and administrators based on conceptualizations of collegial and bureaucratic models of how an institution should operate. Austin and Gamson (1983) wrote that the academic workplace comprised two cultures—one of administrators, which is bureaucratic, and one of faculty, which is collegial. Some sociologists have argued that the diffusion of the bureaucratic model throughout the higher education field has led to the strengthening of bureaucratic-managerial control through the expansion and dominance of university administrators (Brint 2008; Rhoades 1998). As universities have expanded to serve growing and myriad needs and demands, the vertical structure of the increasingly bureaucratic organization and horizontal structure of the profession leads to conflict between the profession and the bureaucracy (Harries-Jenkins in Jackson 1970).

What emerges is a dualism in the organizational structure: faculty and administrators occupying separate, not often interconnecting spheres (Birnbaum 1988) with a two-tiered system of authority—administrative authority and professional authority (Etzioni 1964). Or, as Gumport (2002) described this tension: two institutional logics at work in the institution—an industry logic based on the bureaucratic model of institutions and a social institution logic based on the collegial model of institutions. In the growing struggle between professional, occupational control and bureaucratic-managerial control in the university, Brint (2008) argued that in the realm of higher education teaching (one area of the profession that is targeted by the increased public and political interest in student learning outcomes assessments), the scale is tilting toward bureaucratic-managerial control.

> The basic dilemma in the university is the appropriate balance between bureaucratic structure and formal authority, with their emphasis on accountability and rationality, and functional authority and collegial organization, with their stress on informality. In other words, the dilemma is between power and influence (McConnell and Mortimer 1971:3-4).

When SLO assessments, especially those like the CLA that are developed outside of the institution, are adopted by an institution's administrators, this might be construed by faculty as an intrusion into their professional work, dipping into the jurisdiction of teaching and learning, and an attempt by another group to appropriate their power (Abbott 1988; Freidson 1970; Larson 1977; Rhoades 1998). "Administrators may attempt to introduce new institutional policies in response to regulations enacted or proposed by state agencies, calls for accountability by external study groups, or potential fiscal emergencies based on worst-case scenarios. These policies almost always seek to increase administrative authority" (Birnbaum 1989:435). Patricia Broadfoot articulated assessment as a mechanism for social control in the educational process and that it allowed for "sorting and allocation in a regulated and legitimate manner" (1996:9).

One part of this study examined the changing role of professors in light of the increasingly expansive and powerful role of administrators and support professionals on campus, and how these professionals and "managerial professionals" (Rhoades 1998) are engaged in conflict with faculty. That is, how was faculty response to SLO assessment on a campus a reflection of these trends? I hypothesized the following might influence their response to SLO assessment: (1) faculty apply a cognitive framework based on their understanding of the organizational model—collegial or bureaucratic, for instance—in which they work (Peterson and White 1992; Tichy 1983), and this framework guides their role within the organization and their expectations of other groups' roles; (2)

tensions might arise when competing organizational models and cognitive frameworks are activated by different constituent groups in the same institution; and (3) the extent to which faculty in an institution feel that their jurisdictional boundaries are being challenged and/or encroached upon by administrators.

The faculty function in two institutions: the profession and the organization (Harries-Jenkins in Jackson 1970). As members of both a profession and an organization, this simultaneous membership can lead to role conflicts (Austin and Gamson 1983; Baldridge 1971; Scott 1966). In particular, faculty's perception of the organization to which they belong—applying the collegial and bureaucratic organizational models—is an important consideration because I want to examine how this perception is compatible or incompatible with the organizational model of which they *desire* to be a part. I contend that the degree of this compatibility—between perception of their *existing* role in the organization and their understanding of how the organization itself operates and their *desired* role in the organization and the kind of organization to which they want to belong—might influence their acceptance of value-added assessment in their institution. Thus, in trying to understand collective faculty response to SLO assessment in U.S. bachelor-degree granting colleges and universities, the literature I have presented here suggests it might be helpful to consider that faculty and higher education administrators have clashing cognitive frameworks of organization, that jurisdictional boundaries may be in dispute and fluid, and that faculty possibly face challenges to their power and diminishment of their role on campus.

Conclusion

There's a need in the literature to examine the interaction of professionalized occupational roles and complex organizations as well as the interaction between professional groups within an organization. My study contributed to this relative absence by examining the transformations occurring in the academic profession, how faculty perceive their role in the university and their relationship to other groups (namely administrators) in the institution, and how (through what organizational structures) faculty voice and act on these relationship dynamics and challenges to jurisdictional boundaries. Response to SLO assessment may reflect faculty's larger concern with a changing professional role within the university. As Richard Hersh, former co-director of the CLA and former president of Hobart and William Smith Colleges and Trinity College, stated:

> . . .we in the academy *ought* to take the lead on assessment and accountability because we are professionals. Because of our training and professional status we are obligated and best equipped to assess learning. Might I also say that if we do not do it, others less capable will do it for us (2004:2).

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction and Overview

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine and understand why collective faculty response to student learning outcomes (SLO) assessments like the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) varies at bachelor's degree-granting institutions. I believed that studying this phenomenon would provide insight into the professoriate—how they perceive accountability and assessment impacting their professions, their identity as professors, and their role in the institution. I thought it might also provide policy implications of the viability of using SLO assessment as a form of public accountability and as a strategy to improve teaching and learning. Finally, I believed that understanding how faculty collectively voice and assert their role and identity on college campuses could provide us with a deeper understanding of how higher education institutions function and the relationship amongst key players within the organization.

This study was a multi-case study using qualitative research methods. The primary method of data collection was interviews with university faculty, faculty representatives, and university administrators. In this chapter, I lay out the research design and explain how I selected the institutions and participants for the study. I then discuss my data collection and data analysis, concluding with the researcher's perspective.

Research Design

This dissertation used a qualitative case study design, using five case studies, to explore why faculty react to SLO assessment—the CLA—in the ways that they do. A qualitative research approach seemed the most suited to this constructivist approach

because I could examine the realities constructed by individuals as they interact within the institution. Qualitative research allowed me to emphasize the important function of context, particularly the historical backdrop and cultural setting, thereby enabling me to inductively develop meaning from the data collected rather than set out to test an existing theory. As Merriam (1998) stated (quoting from Sanders (1982:44)): “Case studies help us to understand processes of events, projects, and programs and to discover context characteristics that will shed light on an issue or object."

A case study is an “intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon, social unit, or system bounded by time or place” (Bloomberg & Volpe 2008). Because the case study is a bounded system, a phenomenon that can be “fence[d] in” (Merriam 1998) the data collection process is not infinite. Because my research question is exploratory and explanatory—I am interested in examining causal factors driving collective faculty response to SLO assessment—I think that this project is well-situated to be examined via case studies. As Yin (2003) states, “In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (p. 1).

Sample

The Institutions

I used purposive sampling in choosing the five case study sites because purposeful sampling “is based on the assumptions that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned”(Cresswell 1998:61). Initially, I tried to identify institutional cases where

faculty were either largely unsupportive of the CLA or enthusiastically supportive of it. I thought that critical case sampling—selecting the cases that most dramatically illustrated the phenomenon being studied—would provide a clearer picture of the phenomenon being studied. I came across a challenge in identifying institutions where faculty might have collectively been very resistant to the CLA. Ideally, I wanted to include some institutions that elected *not* to use the CLA because of faculty resistance to it. I tried to identify such cases by asking staff at the Council for Aid to Education (CAE)—the developers of the CLA—if they knew of such faculty resistance cases anecdotally that I might pursue. CAE could not divulge such information, my staff contact said, because they had to maintain institutions' confidentiality. This resulted in an amendment to my case study selection in that I referred back to my own personal history and knowledge of the institutions that I had worked with in my past employment with CAE and the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC).

Because of the broad range of postsecondary institutions in the United States, I narrowed the search for potential case study sites by using the following initial criteria:

- The institution selected is a bachelor's degree-granting college or university. I am interested in faculty working in four-year higher education institutions.
- It is an accredited university.
- The institution had implemented the CLA for at least one academic year between 2005 and 2012. It is important that the site has implemented the CLA for at least one academic year because a complete cycle of CLA testing involves administering the CLA to first-year students in the fall and to seniors in the following spring, with the complete CLA results—available in an end-of-year,

institutional report—delivered to the participating institution in the summer after the completion of senior testing. Also, it is often shortly before implementation and during the implementation academic year that faculty become aware of and potentially act upon the introduction of the CLA on their campus.

Additional factors I considered in the selection of sites were the practical aspects of conducting research: travel, cost of gathering data on-site, and key figures in the institution who were willing to participate in the study (which was particularly important for me in order to establish faculty response to the CLA and SLO assessment).

Considering the attributes listed above, I drew four of my case study sites from a group of institutions that participated in the CLA as part of a consortium between the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) and the Council for Aid to Education (CAE) called the CIC/CLA Consortium. This consortium, which I will describe in more detail, was active from 2005-2012. All of the institutions in this consortium are CIC members. Criteria for CIC membership are as follows (retrieved and adapted 3/31/15, www.cic.edu):

- Be a nonprofit, independent, small to mid-sized institution;
- Offer a program leading to a bachelor of arts degree (or equivalent);
- Demonstrate a commitment to the liberal arts and sciences (i.e. require for graduation approximately one-third of all courses taken to be in those fields);
- Offer several areas of concentration in the liberal arts and sciences disciplines;
- Possess at least Candidacy status with a U.S. regional accrediting association; and
- Have been in operation for a minimum of three years.

CIC has a history of being actively involved in the voluntary efforts to improve the quality of student learning and has been a strong advocate of institutional autonomy in accountability efforts. Since 2002, CIC has collaborated with CAE to develop and implement the CLA when it helped CAE identify smaller private colleges to test the prototype of the CLA. In 2003, CIC recruited 12 member colleges and universities to participate in the first year of public use of the CLA. In a 2008 article in *Change* magazine, CIC's president, Richard Ekman, and Stephen Pelletier wrote, "The Council of Independent Colleges' chief concern in the debates about accountability has been the prospect of a government-controlled testing regimen that would run roughshod over institutional autonomy and individual privacy. However, unlike some organizations that cite these principles when resisting accountability measures, CIC has embraced what it has viewed as the best available nongovernmental approaches to assessing educational effectiveness" (http://www.changemag.org/archives/back%20issues/July-August%202008/full-assessing-student-learning.html, retrieved 3/31/15). CIC wanted its members to take a proactive role as SLO assessments like the CLA grew increasingly prominent.

With a grant from the Teagle Foundation in 2005, CIC expanded this initial group of institutions to 33, forming the CIC/CLA consortium. This group committed to administering the CLA for a three-year period (2005-2008); this consortium then expanded to 47 institutions for a second three-year period (2008-2011); then added 10 more institutions in 2010. A smaller subset of this Consortium continued on through spring 2013 with funding from The Carnegie Corporation. Four of my case study sites joined this CIC/CLA Consortium at some point during 2005-2010. As an employee of

CAE from 2003-2009, I was CAE's liaison to CIC, and worked closely with all institutions involved in the CIC/CLA Consortium. My responsibilities included being the primary CAE contact to consortium members, helping members with the logistical details of CLA implementation, answering questions, and assisting in organizing the annual summer CIC/CLA Consortium conferences.

Drawing the sample from amongst institutions that participated in the CIC/CLA Consortium was advantageous for the following reasons:

- As CIC members, they met CIC's membership criteria and thus have similar institutional profiles. Because of the diversity of higher education institutions, I wanted to keep certain features of the institution as similar as possible, not having to compare a very large, state university with a small, private one, for example.
- They had a common point of entry into the CLA—recruited by CIC and CAE to participate in the CIC/CLA consortium.
- A requirement of participation in the consortium was that each institution had to send a team of three faculty and administrators to attend an annual summer meeting focused on the CLA and assessment-related topics; it was at one of these early summer meetings that the issue of faculty engagement arose, particularly the challenge of "selling" the CLA to faculty, so this was already a topic on the minds of administrators and some faculty in the institutions.
- In fall 2013, when I started my data collection, the four participating institutions had a history of implementing the CLA.
- Prior to the study, I had working relationships with senior-level administrators and some faculty (e.g., Chief Academic Officers and Department Chairs) that

facilitated the process for securing institutional agreement to participate and obtaining access to potential interviewees and documents. (I will discuss the potential limitations of having pre-existing relationships later in this chapter.)

I also included a fifth case study that is not a CIC institution. The fifth institution that agreed to participate in my study is a mid-sized, public state university, part of a state system of more than 15 institutions. I chose it to provide contrast—particularly in its accountability structure—to the four CIC institutions selected. When I worked at CAE (from 2003-2009), I worked with an administrator at this institution, assisting him in the implementation of the CLA.

One challenge in selecting from the group of CIC institutions was that because they have administered the CLA over a period of several years, it was very possible that collective faculty response changed over time. However, I felt that this was not a rationale for eliminating these institutions from case study consideration. Rather, I believed that if faculty response did change over time, then there was important information to be gathered from the change, that the experiences and evolution (or not) over time could reveal how administrators and faculty have worked out their relationship with one another and to accountability and assessment.

Another challenge was that in selecting institutions that may have administered the CLA several years ago, I was asking participants to recall events that occurred a while back. Whenever possible, I substantiated the interview data with other data (e.g., archival) that were available.

Finally, I want to address my purposive sampling. Within the framework of purposive sampling, I reached out to institutions and key individuals involved in SLO

assessment within each institution with whom I already had prior working relationships through the CIC/CLA Consortium. I did this because in order to answer satisfactorily my research question, to make potential claims and conclusions, I needed to secure interviews with specific individuals in leadership positions and with direct knowledge and experience with SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA. Without the input of these individuals, I could not be confident in the data I gathered. Therefore, I believed (post hoc correctly) that having a key contact make my introduction to potential participants would increase the likelihood of these individuals participating in my study. I also had to narrow down possible case study institutions based on geographic location due to significant cost and travel constraints.

In Table 1 below, I present some basic institutional information on each of the five institutions in my study.

Table 1. Basic Institutional Information

Institution	Regional Accreditor	Approx. undergraduate population (NCES, fall 2013)	CLA first implemented
Stamper College	SACS	1,000	2005
Grant State University	SACS	5,500	2007
Redeemer College	HLC	1,400	2008
University of Carlow	NEASC	3,000	2010
Morrisville University	SACS	1,000	2007

Once I had established the parameters of my potential case study institutions, I reached out to my key contacts in the institutions that met the criteria. This occurred in late spring/early summer 2013. These key contacts ranged from the Chief Academic Officers to faculty members to Directors of Institutional Research. They were all individuals who had represented their institution in the CIC/CLA Consortium.

Once I obtained initial verbal agreement from my contacts that their institution might consider participating in the study, I spent July through September 2013 securing approval from each individual institution, and this varied by institution. I received Teachers College Institutional Review Board approval for my study on July 22, 2013 (TC protocol #13-314). For one institution I had to complete a separate application that was reviewed and signed off by their Human Subjects Review Subcommittee; I then received a letter of permission to conduct my study by the institution's president. In a second institution, I not only had to submit a human subject research application, but also had to take an online "Ethics for Researchers" course through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative. One institution only required a signed letter of permission from the president, and another required a signed letter of permission from the Chief Academic Officer. The Human Subjects Review Committee in a fifth institution reviewed my research protocol before giving approval.

The Participants

This dissertation aimed to distinguish between faculty role at the individual level and the group level. For the purposes of this project, I focused on faculty members' articulation of their role as a group within the institution and administrators' articulation of their role as a group within the institution. Therefore, I targeted faculty primarily who, in their roles, could speak as faculty representatives. I also interviewed administrators who were in positions to represent the voice of the administration, particularly on academics. Additionally, because my topic was SLO assessment and the CLA, it was important to secure interviews with faculty and administrators who were familiar with SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA at the institution.

In order to maintain individual anonymity, I categorized participants as "faculty member," "faculty representative," "mid-level administrator," and "senior-level administrator." In only one institution—Morrisville University—due to the small size of the faculty and the need to take extra precaution in preserving anonymity, I did not distinguish between faculty member and faculty representative but put them all under the single category "faculty member." Table 2 (below) provides a crosswalk of each of the four categories and some of the positions that fall under each of these four categories. This is not an exhaustive list.

Table 2. Crosswalk of Participant Categories and Positions

Category	Position
Faculty member	Full-time faculty member
Faculty representative	Department Chair Faculty Senate/Assembly Leader (e.g., Moderator, Chair, Vice-Chair) Faculty Senate representative
Mid-level administrator	Dean Director of Institutional Research Quality Enhancement Plan Director Vice President Student Affairs SACS Coordinator
Senior-level administrator	President Chief Academic Officer (e.g., Provost, Vice President of Academic Affairs, other senior academic administrators) Members of President's Council

In some institutions, there were participants whose roles and responsibilities as a mid-level administrator overlapped with their roles and responsibilities as a faculty member. This was a unique category of "teaching administrator," where the individual maintains faculty evaluation but more than 50% of the role is administrative. In these instances, I categorized the individual as a mid-level administrator because I asked them to take that perspective when answering my questions.

Amongst the faculty members and faculty representatives, I made sure to include faculty who participated in institutional governance beyond the main faculty governing body of the representative Faculty Senate or all-Faculty Assembly. This was mainly through committee participation and some of these committees represented are (not exhaustive list) Curriculum Committee, Assessment Committee, General Education (or Core Curriculum) Committee, Retention Committee, and Promotion and Tenure Committee.

Additionally, because my study addressed SLO assessment and the CLA specifically, I made sure to interview faculty and administrators who were closely involved, or had been involved, in the following: regional accreditation, general education revision, vetting the CLA, implementing the CLA, attending a CLA in the Classroom Performance Task Academy, and analyzing their institution's CLA results.

When an institution agreed to participate (all agreements to participate were in place by September 2013), I drafted an initial list of potential interviewees by reviewing the institution's website and trying to identify who I thought would be key figures at the administrative and professorial levels involved in the management of the institution and involved in matters of governance, assessment (SLO and CLA), and curriculum. I then shared this initial list with my primary contact at each institution to obtain feedback. I asked whether those individuals were still in the positions indicated on the website or if others had assumed the role; I asked for additional names of individuals involved in positions of governance, assessment (SLO and CLA), and curriculum who were not on the list. I also asked my contact who he/she considered to be faculty leaders—faculty members whose voices were well respected among their colleagues.

When my list was developed, my key contact at each institution sent out an email to these individuals, letting them know in what capacity the key contact knew me, the nature of my project, and that I would be reaching out to them. Then I sent out a recruitment email directly to the potential participants on my list explaining my research project and inviting them to participate as research subjects. So that I did not base this list of interviewees solely from my research and information provided by my contacts, once participants responded to my request (yes or no), I made sure to ask them who else they thought I should interview. While there might be a concern that the key contacts tried to stack the deck and only list participants who they thought might provide a certain perspective on my topic, I am confident that this did not happen. Firstly, they made a point of suggesting that I include participants who were not necessarily enthusiasts of SLO assessment and the CLA (and provided me with those names); secondly, because they had gone through the dissertation process themselves, they were very scrupulous about trying to help me reduce selection bias, and trying to provide me with a broad representation of viewpoints; and thirdly, when I asked other participants to suggest names, the same names frequently emerged.

Data Collection

Data collection in the form of face-to-face interviews took place from September 2013 through February 2014. I conducted a total of 66 interviews. Sixty-two of the interviews occurred face-to-face. The remaining four occurred by phone: one was due to illness, one due to my inability to travel to this individual's location, and the remaining two were because they were out of town when my site visit occurred. Sixty-two interviews were recorded; one was not recorded due to technical difficulties, and three

declined to be recorded so I took hand-written notes instead. Two of my institutions required my flying to the site; for one institution located in the Midwest, I conducted 13 interviews over a four-day period; for the institution located in the Northeast, I made two sites visits, one in October 2013 and one in November 2013.

Once a participant agreed to be interviewed, I sent a follow-up email that described broadly the four general areas that I wanted to cover in the interview: professorial (or administrator) identity and role in the institution; governance; relationship between administration and faculty; and student learning outcomes assessment (specifically the CLA). I also attached the Research Description and Informed Consent Form, approved by the TC Institutional Review Board. About a week prior to the scheduled interview, I sent out a reminder email and attached a Pre-Interview Form that I asked them to complete and email to me in advance of our interview. The purpose of the Pre-Interview was simply to gather some basic information to help focus my interview. The Pre-Interview form asked them questions such as the length of time they worked at the institution, the subjects they taught, other kinds of higher education institutions they taught in the past, their current title/position at the institution, former titles/positions they had held at the institution, university committees involved in governance, curriculum, and/or assessment in which they participate, and how much of their work was taken up by administrative duties versus teaching duties. The Pre-Interview Form was also a good way to have the individual self-identify as an administrator, faculty member, or both.

Interviews were semi-structured, with open-ended questions. I used my interview protocol that was approved by Teachers College's Institutional Review Board in July 2013. Interviews were approximately 90-minutes in duration. Of my 62 face-to-face

interviews, all but four of them occurred in the privacy of the individual's campus office. Two took place in restaurants, one took place in the individual's home, and the fourth took place in a campus cafeteria. During every interview, I also took handwritten notes, sometimes jotting down the participant's affect and my impressions, and noting where I might want to follow-up. After each site visit, I wrote a brief summary of my general impressions from the visit.

The following charts provide a graphical overview of some of the general characteristics of the 66 participants (based on information they provided on the Pre-Interview Form). Chart A provides the total counts across institutions of those I interviewed at the senior-level administrator, mid-level administrator, and faculty member/faculty representative levels.

Chart A. Organizational Role

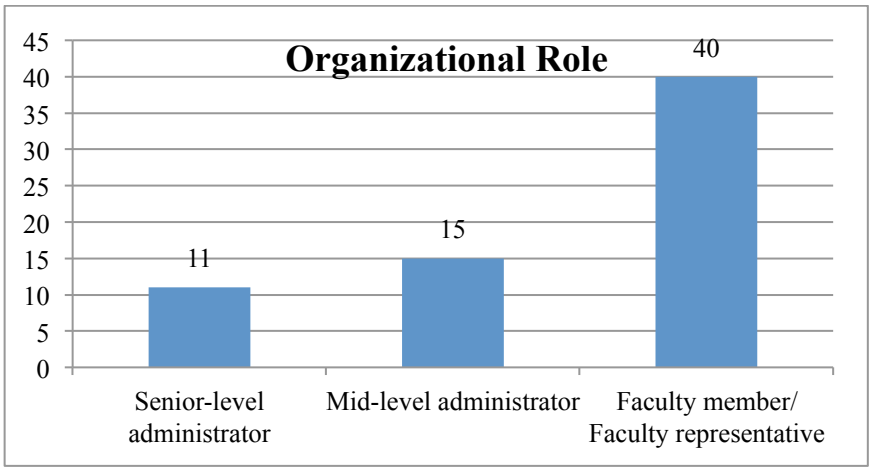


Chart B provides a breakdown by gender of the participants across all five institutions.

Chart B. Gender

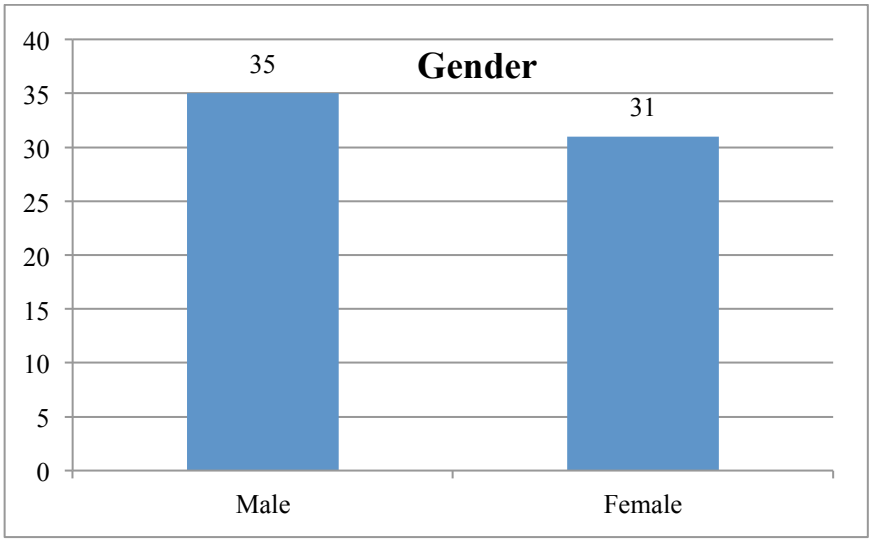
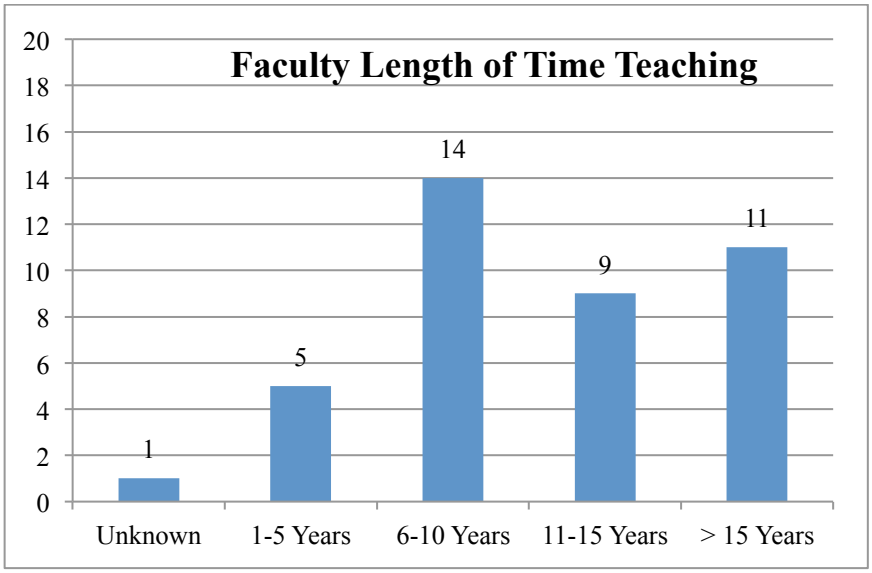


Chart C displays the number of years that faculty members and faculty representatives across institutions reported on the Pre-Interview Form that they had been working at the institution (not the total length of time that they had been in the profession).

Chart C. Length of Time Teaching in the Institution



One of the challenges in asking participants to recollect events that occurred a few years ago (in some instances) or longer is capturing the accuracy of those recollections. Whenever possible, I triangulated this information from other sources—other interviewees' responses, documents, etc. Because multiple participants in an institution often relayed the same events to me, triangulation didn't prove to be too challenging.

I also collected relevant supplementary documents (digital or hard copy) that could substantiate, and provide additional context to, the interview data. These documents included Senate meeting minutes, reports, information from the institution's website, books on the institution, and media articles on key campus events from on-campus or local news sources.

Human Subjects and Data Management

This dissertation required human subjects approval from the Institutional Review Board at Teachers College, Columbia University, which was granted in July 2013. At the onset of every interview, I reviewed the Informed Consent form with the participant. This included a description of the research project, what I would be asking the participant to do, stressing the voluntary nature of participation, and stated that the participant could decline to answer any question. I also reviewed data storage procedures and how I would protect confidentiality not only of the individual but also of the institution. I then reviewed the Participant's Rights form; if the individual agreed to proceed with the interview, I had him/her sign the form, keeping a copy for my records. I then signed the Investigator's Verification of Explanation form and gave each participant a copy.

While there were no direct benefits of participating in the study, I did point out potential risks of embarrassment, discomfort and/or recrimination in their employment.

Because there might be events that the participant chose to share that might reflect negatively on certain offices in the institution and representatives of those offices, I reiterated to all participants the voluntary nature of participation, that the individual could pass on any of my questions, and that I would do whatever I could to protect an individual or institution from being recognized by a reader. The names of all individuals were changed and I did not use their titles but replaced them with generic titles such as faculty member, faculty representative, etc. Interviewees were also told that they could decline to be recorded or request to stop the taping at any time. All recordings of the interviews were stored on password-protected digital files and hard-copy transcripts of interviews and identifiable material collected were stored in a locked filing cabinet.

Data Analysis

From January 2014 through July 2014, I transcribed all 62 recorded interviews, and typed up my handwritten notes from the four un-recorded interviews. While extremely time-consuming, the great benefit of this process was that I re-visited each interview aurally again. I could hear the elements that a transcription can miss: significant pauses, tone of voice, inflections, and hesitations. And as I typed, I also took notes, teasing out themes, and identifying commonalities across interviews within and across institutions. Throughout, I tried to keep an open mind; trying not to make the data fit into preconceived notions but to let the story emerge from each of my institutions. These notes greatly informed the development of my coding scheme.

Once I had the nearly 1,200 single-spaced pages of raw data prepared, I carefully read through each transcript, experiencing each interview a third time in written format. I took more notes, highlighted passages, began to determine the recurring patterns

(Bloomberg and Volpe 2008). Because my interview protocol was based on my conceptual framework, I was able, in this round of data examination, to group the data into four broad categories: professorial identity and role in the institution, governance, the relationship between faculty and administrators, and accountability and assessment. Going through the data this third time allowed me to refine these four categories into a draft coding scheme. I used this draft coding scheme to prepare an outline for a site summary for each of the five institutions. For example, one section of my site summary outline was on "The Faculty." I used the following codes to identify quotes from the transcripts that could be placed under "The Faculty": responsibilities of professor, changes in professorial role, challenges faced by faculty, collective faculty identity, and faculty governance role.

I then tested the draft coding scheme against the data from an entire institution. I hand-coded these transcripts—highlighting relevant passages and putting the codes in the margins. This resulted in my refining the coding scheme even further—I added codes, eliminated some, collapsed others. Specifically, I was able to develop child codes of possible participant responses to a parent code.

Once I had a coding scheme established, I went through each of the 66 transcripts and hand-coded them. This would be the fourth time I reviewed the data. The tactile process of highlighting and coding by hand was preferable to using a cloud-based software program like Dedoose. I found that I could "see" the data more clearly, could draw the connections better when I could literally flip the pages from one participant interview to another. Because of my familiarity with the data at this point, I could easily locate "where" in the transcript the quote could be found and reference what was said

before and after the selected text to provide additional context when necessary. And because I had a site summary outline for each institution based on the coding scheme, I excerpted data as I coded and placed them into the corresponding sections of the institution's site summary document. By the time I had finished the site summaries for each institution, for example, I had collected all relevant data for understanding "faculty power," and could pull "faculty power" across all five institutions. The site summary for each institution eventually became the basis for my presentation of findings (Chapters IV, V, and VI of this dissertation).

Researcher Perspective

My interest in this topic stemmed directly from my participation in helping to shape, launch, and administer the CLA. While a doctoral student at Teachers College, Columbia University, I took a position with the Council for Aid to Education (CAE) in 2003 to help CAE introduce a newly-developed, value-added assessment called the "Collegiate Learning Assessment" (CLA). From 2003 to 2009, I moved the CLA from a pencil and paper exam to a web-based assessment, recruited and supported institutions delivering the CLA, developed and managed the scoring component of the CLA, and assisted in the creation of new test items. From 2008 to the end of my tenure at CAE in the summer of 2009, I was the head of CLA testing operations.

It was in providing support and guidance to over 100 institutions in the early years of my involvement that a recurring theme emerged: faculty resistance to the CLA. My primary contacts at these institutions were often high-level university administrators or institutional researchers and from many of them I anecdotally gathered tales of their frustration in trying to get faculty "on board" with the CLA. Examples included faculty

mounting resistance formally through committee meetings or issuing statements, deterring students from taking the CLA, or dismissing the value of the CLA without ever having seen a sample exam. But I also heard stories of faculty who were intrigued by the CLA and saw it as a potential tool to try to transform teaching and learning in their classrooms. And, of course, in-between the detractors and supporters, there were a vast number who either remained completely unaware or chose to ignore it altogether.

In 2007, a co-worker and I created a two-day workshop to reach out directly to faculty. Using the template of the CLA's performance task, the CLA in the Classroom Performance Task Academy was designed to help faculty develop critical thinking tasks in their own courses and departments. In a two-year period of hosting over 30 workshops to 600+ faculty members, my interest in faculty response to SLO assessment grew. In these workshops, I encountered directly faculty resistance (sometimes hostility) and enthusiasm. I also had numerous informal conversations with faculty and administrator participants about changes in faculty roles and in their institutions. Thus, arose my interest in exploring faculty roles and identity in a changing university.

While my direct experiences with the CLA over a six-year period served to provide unique insights into the topic, particularly as an "insider," I fully acknowledge that it can also be a liability, potentially biasing my research design and influencing the interpretation of my findings. I committed myself to maintaining a critical self-reflection throughout my inquiries and analysis. I also acknowledge that some participants, particularly faculty, might have seen me as a representative of CIC or CAE and that this could have potentially influenced their responses during the interview. At the onset of the interview, I disclosed to participants my prior involvement with CAE and CIC and

emphasized that I was no longer employed by either group (my employment with CAE terminated in June 2009 and my contractual working agreement with CIC concluded on May 31, 2013 before I began asking institutions to participate in my study). I reiterated to each participant my agnosticism on the topic, while emphasizing my deep-felt interest in giving voice to faculty.

Finally, I would like to mention that, in the end, the openness in which administrators and faculty spoke to me dispelled a lot of my initial concerns that they would be too circumspect in our interviews because of my former position as a CAE and CIC employee, or because they were concerned about any risks of their participation. Instead, their frankness surprised me. I also didn't anticipate the emotional connection that I made with some of the participants, especially when they shared very personal feelings about their experiences and described their identity as a faculty member. Maintaining my role as the researcher, I kept an unbiased and neutral stance.

Summary

In this chapter, I described my research design, and how I assembled my sample of five institutions as well as the participants within each institution. I then described how I collected and analyzed the data, and ended with the researcher perspective. In the next three chapters (Chapters IV, V, and VI), I present my findings from each of the five institutions.

PREFACE TO CHAPTERS IV, V, AND VI

This multi-case study set out to explore collective faculty response to student learning outcomes assessment and the Collegiate Learning Assessment at five bachelor's degree-granting postsecondary institutions—four small, private institutions and one mid-sized, public institution. Using a multi-case study methodology to illustrate this phenomenon, the knowledge generated from this study will help us better understand the key causal factors driving faculty response and the impact that student learning outcomes assessment like the CLA are having on faculty, particularly on the professorial role.

I asked the following research question: Why does collective faculty response to student learning outcomes assessment like the Collegiate Learning Assessment vary among undergraduate institutions? In asking this central question, I subsequently asked two sub-questions: (a) How do faculty understand the aim of student learning outcomes assessments like the CLA? and (b) How do faculty perceive this kind of assessment impacting their role as professors?

Understanding collective faculty response to the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) and the larger issue of student learning outcomes (SLO) assessment enhances our understanding of the professoriate: how they perceive accountability and assessment impacting their profession, their identity as professors, and their role in the institution.

In the following three chapters, I present summary findings from my five case study sites to help answer these questions. I have grouped the case studies into chapters according to how the CLA and SLO assessment were introduced to faculty at the institution and how faculty responded to the CLA and SLO assessment.

Chapter IV, *A Top-Down Approach to Building "A Culture of Assessment,"* introduces Stamper College, a small private institution, and Grant State University, a mid-sized, public institution. Both had very influential senior-level administrators who decided that they would implement the CLA at their respective institutions. At Stamper College, this demonstration of administrative authority resulted in a fierce faculty rejection of the CLA, while the response from faculty at Grant State University to the introduction of the CLA was more of a passive acceptance/passive resistance. The two case studies explore what accounted for these two different reactions.

At both institutions, senior-level administrators who were proponents of the CLA articulated a vision of creating a "culture of assessment" at their institutions. For Stamper College, this vision took the form of a persuasive approach of assessment messaging and cultivating faculty to be experts and leaders in SLO assessment. Grant State University, too, took a persuasive approach similar to Stamper College. But this institution, more than any of the institutions in the study, took a detailed structural approach to creating a culture of assessment: developing reporting and accountability mechanisms, creating staff positions, and establishing a professional development program called the CLA Institute.

Chapter V, *Consensus-Building from the Bottom-Up*, tells the stories of Redeemer College and the University of Carlow. In many ways they are polar opposites. Redeemer College has an extremely cohesive faculty united by a shared religious worldview, and the University of Carlow has a very diverse faculty culture. The former results in an all-Faculty Assembly that is quite unified, vocal, and powerful. The latter results in a relatively fragmented, somewhat ineffectual, representative Faculty Assembly. Faculty at Redeemer College described their institution as a collegial organization. Faculty at the

University of Carlow described their institution as a bureaucratic one. What they have in common is that senior-level administrators in both institutions were heedful from the outset to introduce the CLA to faculty in a non-assertive way. In both institutions, administrators made sure to secure a solid base of faculty support of the CLA, and I explore why this approach was taken.

In Chapter VI, *Wielding the CLA to Assert Professional Authority and Identity,* Morrisville University stands alone as the only institution in my study where the faculty, especially one faculty leader, took the lead in introducing the CLA at the institution. As a result, Morrisville University had broad faculty support for the first few years that the CLA was implemented. When a new, autocratic administration took over in 2010, the administration's decisions over the next three years devastated the faculty. Shared governance was effectively wiped out, and the administration's disregard for faculty input on major academic matters denied faculty their professional identity and authority. When the CLA came on the administration's chopping block, the faculty fought to keep it, maintaining that as their jurisdiction.

CHAPTER IV

A TOP-DOWN APPROACH TO BUILDING A "CULTURE OF ASSESSMENT"

Overview to Chapter IV

In this chapter, I begin with an introduction to Stamper College, a small private institution. I then present Grant State University, a mid-sized, public institution. Both had very influential senior-level administrators who decided that they would implement the CLA at their respective institutions.

Stamper College is a case study of an institution where a strong-willed CAO decided, as part of her vision of improving academic quality, that she was going to "build a culture of assessment" at Stamper by ushering in SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA. When she introduced the CLA at an all-Faculty Assembly, they revolted. The CAO retreated, changed tactics, and put assessment in faculty's jurisdiction, resulting in faculty accepting the CLA and SLO assessment and trying to find ways to use its results to improve teaching and learning practices. At Stamper College, faculty wariness over past administrative overreach, combined with a senior-level administrator who had a reputation for being strong-willed, influenced faculty's initial interpretation of the CLA as something punitive and resulted in faculty's extreme initial reaction. Once assessment was defined as faculty responsibility, as part of their jurisdiction, resistance dissipated and faculty incorporated assessments, SLOs, and the CLA into their work.

Grant State University is a case study of a public institution that operates under a top-down, bureaucratic model of organization. As part of a state system of higher education institutions, Grant State University (GSU) reports to a System Administration

that is run by a Board of Governors appointed by, and accountable to, the state legislature. This state legislature emphasizes accountability, measurement, and outcomes. The current CAO—very popular and trusted—introduced the CLA to GSU and continues to be an active advocate of the CLA there. Here, too, the CAO articulated building a "culture of assessment" at GSU, and in this case, the institution constructed an assessment infrastructure to enforce (via reporting requirements) and encourage (via the CLA Institute, financial incentives, and hiring mid-level administrators to oversee assessment) faculty engagement in assessment. While the representative Faculty Assembly voted to implement the CLA, faculty reaction to the CLA has been mixed, with a solid, core group of faculty engaged in CLA activities through GSU's CLA Institute, and the rest seeming to be less supportive, resistant, or indifferent.

Together these case studies explore why a demonstration of administrative authority at Stamper College resulted in a fierce faculty rejection of the CLA, while administrative authority in introducing the CLA at GSU resulted in a more passive acceptance/passive resistance from faculty. At both institutions, senior-level administrators who were proponents of the CLA articulated a vision of creating a "culture of assessment" at their institutions. For Stamper College, this vision took the form of a persuasive approach of assessment messaging and cultivating faculty to be experts and leaders in SLO assessment. Grant State University, too, took a persuasive approach similar to Stamper College. But this institution, more than any of the institutions in the study, took a detailed structural approach to creating a culture of assessment: developing reporting and accountability mechanisms, creating staff positions, and establishing a professional development program called the CLA Institute.

Stamper College: From Faculty Resistance to Faculty Engagement

Introduction

Stamper College is a small, four-year, traditional liberal arts college located in a town with a population of about 50,000 in the rural Southeast. With approximately 1,000 full-time undergraduates, the institution draws its students mainly from the region. Upon stepping on to the compact campus in October 2013, I was struck by how the physical layout embodies the traditional images of "college" with its sturdy oak trees and a small chapel in the center of the campus from which walkways radiate. But look a little closer and you will see that this gracious belle is dearly worn: wooden chairs in the library that have been around longer than the students are old, peeling paint, classrooms in need of technological updates.

Stamper College is a case study of an institution where a strong-willed CAO decided—as part of her vision of improving academic quality—to "build a culture of assessment" at Stamper by ushering in student learning outcomes (SLO), SLO assessment, and the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA). When she got around to introducing the CLA at an all-faculty meeting, they revolted. The CAO retreated, changed tactics, and put assessment in faculty's jurisdiction, resulting in faculty accepting the CLA and SLO assessment, and trying to find ways to use its results to improve teaching and learning practices. At Stamper College, faculty wariness over past administrative overreach, combined with a senior-level administrator who had a reputation for being strong-willed, influenced faculty's initial interpretation of the CLA. Once assessment was defined as faculty responsibility, the resistance dissipated and faculty incorporated assessments, SLOs, and the CLA into their work.

I begin with background information on Stamper College, then show how SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA gained a stronghold at the institution. In trying to understand the initial, harsh response of faculty to the CLA, I discuss governance at the institution, and include a very significant event in the institution's recent past to show how it might have influenced faculty response. Next, I talk about the faculty at Stamper: how they describe their "faculty culture," how they articulate their roles and responsibilities as professors, and how they perceive SLO assessment's place in their work role, and its impact on the work role. Finally, I discuss what participants mean when they speak of building "a culture of assessment" at the institution.

Background

The institution offers a mix of liberal arts and professional majors. It was established by a religious organization in the early twentieth century, and while the institution maintains this religious affiliation, none of the interviewees except for one newly appointed, senior-level administrator commented on this connection (and that was in reference to the institution's history). Stamper College's vision statement proclaims that it takes advantage of its small size to focus on students, and to create "a community of active learners" (retrieved from website on 2/2/15). Rather than a large, public institution, which might be more about "its footprint in the world," Stamper College is "about the footprint on the students," explained a mid-level administrator. In accordance with this individual's comment, almost all interviewees described it first and foremost as a "teaching institution."

According to NCES College Navigator data from fall 2013, 42 percent of those who apply are admitted, and 18 percent of those admitted enroll (NCES, fall 2013).

According to the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan (submitted in 2008 as part of its SACS reaccreditation), 62 percent of Stamper's students come from a 50-mile radius of the town in which the institution is located, and one-third are designated as first generation (2008 Quality Enhancement Plan, retrieved from website on 2/1/15).[3] Fifty percent of the undergraduate students receive Pell Grants. The three largest programs, according to the number of bachelor awards conferred in 2012-2013, are Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services (specifically Business Administration and Management, General), Public Administration and Social Service Professions (specifically Social Work), and Health Professions and Related Programs (specifically Registered Nursing).[4] The students are taught by over 70 full-time faculty members, and nearly 40 part-time instructors (NCES, fall 2013).

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO), SLO Assessment, and the CLA

In this section, I present how SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA gained a stronghold at the institution as well as faculty reaction to the CLA. I then share an event in Stamper's recent history to show how it may have played a part in influencing faculty's reaction to the CLA. When discussing SLO and SLO assessment, I focus on institution-wide SLO that are part of the institution's General Education curriculum, and not on program-level or course-level SLO.

The Accreditor is Coming! The Accreditor is Coming!

Stamper College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS), the regional body for the accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states. Because affirmation

[3] I will be discussing the institution's Quality Enhancement Plan in a later section.
[4] These categories of programs/majors are from the NCES College Navigator.

for institutions occurs on a 10-year cycle, Stamper had its most recent SACS on-site reaffirmation visit in September 2008, and was officially notified of its reaffirmation in summer 2009.

Several years before the 2008 visit, Sara, a senior-level administrator at the time, realized that SACS accreditation visits had changed significantly. Sara had been at the institution nearly 40 years, taught classes for 30 of those years, and took on mid-level administrator and eventually senior-level administrator positions along the way. She was retired when I started interviewing in fall 2013, but I was fortunate enough to track her down and interview her because she was a central figure in bringing about SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA at Stamper. In many ways, she is ground zero.

When she assumed her role as a senior-level administrator (before the 2008 SACS visit), Sara selected Joe, a senior faculty member (and a good friend/ally of hers), to take the lead role in coordinating all efforts at Stamper for the accreditation. Since Joe had been at Stamper since the late 1980s, he had already been through a couple of accreditations. Together, Sara and Joe started attending pre-applicant workshops hosted by SACS in 2005, the purpose of which was to familiarize all prospective applicants (including those for reaccreditation) with the procedures for attaining membership and how to complete the application. It was important (and SACS requires the workshop), according to Joe, because "we basically ignored them since they left in '99." That is when Sara and Joe quickly realized that SACS had changed from the 1999 accreditation. Joe described to me one of those meetings: "…when we got there [to the meeting], it became very apparent to us that they were looking at student learning outcomes…it

became crystal clear to us that it was about student learning outcomes." What marked a difference in SACS in the 2000s compared to the 1990s, Sara said, was that

> …it was very obvious that it was no longer the old wine-and-dine, pull the wool over their eyes, get them drunk thing. You really had to have evidence of change and you had to have quality general education programs and you had to have assessments. And that's where I started. That's where everything went back to that. I used SACS relentlessly…. That became the lever that I used to create an assessment culture.

Joe verified Sara's recollection of how the tone of the SACS visit changed. He said that in the past, SACS would come and you "wined and dined them" and when you had received your reaccreditation you would say, "Oh, thank God, we don't have to worry about them for another 10 years." But this time, they knew it was going to be different.

If you look at the SACS website, SACS also hosts an Institutional Effectiveness Workshop for pre-applicants that focuses on helping applicants "to write adequate narratives and appropriately document compliance with the three SACSCOC standards that have historically proven most difficult for applicants to address—Core Requirement 2.5 and Comprehensive Standards 3.3.1 and 3.5.1" (retrieved on 3/19/15, http://www.sacscoc.org/cocapplication1.asp). While I do not know if this is the exact same workshop that Sara and Joe attended, I thought it useful to include because 3.3.1 and 3.5.1 are the standards that focus on SLO and SLO assessment, and Joe had pointed out to me in our conversation that "it was all about 3.3.1" SACS Standard 3.3.1 is nested under Standard 3.3, which is "Institutional Effectiveness." According to SACS' *2008 Principles of Accreditation*,

> 3.3.1 The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas:
>
> 3.3.1.1 educational programs, to include student learning outcomes
>
> 3.3.1.2 administrative support services

3.3.1.3 educational support services
3.3.1.4 research within its educational mission, if appropriate
3.3.1.5 community/public service within its educational mission

Meanwhile, Standard 3.5.1 falls under Standard 3.5, which is "Educational Programs: Undergraduate Programs" and states, "The institution identifies college-level general education competencies and the extent to which graduates have attained them (College-level competencies)." So if Stamper was to get reaccredited, it had no choice but to have their SLO and SLO assessment(s) in place.

Leveraging SACS Reaccreditation to Bring about Curricular Changes: The QEP and the General Education Revision

Sara explained to me that her vision as CAO was to seek ways to improve academic quality at the institution "regardless of how it might make people feel." Former colleagues described Sara as a strong-willed individual who, if she wanted something done, would find a way. Upon becoming a senior-level administrator, she initiated significant changes in the academic areas because she held no illusions that many of the courses lacked academic rigor. As an example of what she meant by "academic quality," she shared with me that one of the first things she did when she became a senior-level administrator, and "[I] can't believe I did it—was to show student grades by department. And it was very obvious that in some departments, students were not being challenged. They couldn't all be that brilliant." If the faculty member failed to address the lack of academic rigor in their course, particularly through in-class assessments, she explained that she would add a comment to that effect in his/her faculty evaluation, thereby lowering the individual's evaluation.

SACS became a convenient lever she could use on faculty to generate the curricular and pedagogical changes she wanted to see as part of her vision to improve academic quality at the institution, and to bring about, as she said, "an assessment culture." Under her direction, faculty began a revision of the General Education curriculum and began the process of creating a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), a plan required for all institutions seeking SACS reaffirmation. According to SACS' website, "The QEP describes a carefully designed and focused course of action that addresses a well-defined topic or issue(s) relate to enhancing student learning" (retrieved from www.sacscoc.org, 2/4/15).

On August 16, 2005, faculty, administrators, and staff brainstormed QEP topics at their annual Faculty and Staff (FAS) week, a weeklong series of meetings and workshops for all Stamper faculty and staff to kick off the new academic year.[5] In January 2007, faculty convened an all-day workshop to narrow down the topics generated during that 2005 FAS week, then presented their findings to a College Assembly (a meeting of faculty and staff). A month later, at Faculty Assembly (a monthly meeting of all full-time faculty), faculty ranked communication skills as the priority. Subsequently, a QEP team was established (comprised of five faculty and one staff member) to narrow down the focus of the QEP within the area of communication. That focus became student writing, with external evidence on the need to improve provided by students' results on the CLA (2005-2006 and 2006-2007 results).[6] *Writing across the Curriculum* became the focal point of the QEP and received approval by a vote from staff and faculty in fall 2007. It

[5] All information on the QEP development timeline and details of the QEP are from the QEP document submitted to SACS, retrieved online from Stamper's website on February 4, 2015.
[6] The CLA was begun in fall 2005, and will be introduced on the following page.

became integrated into the General Education revision (which was also occurring around the same time) by requiring students to take six writing classes, four in the General Education core, and two in the major.[7]

Roughly around the same time that the QEP was being envisioned and drafted, faculty undertook another major initiative—an overhaul of the general education curriculum. A General Education Committee worked on its revision from 2005-2007. Faculty voted to approve it in fall 2007, and fully implemented it in 2010. Explained a senior-level administrator, "The General Education revision, like most of them are, in part to respond to accreditors, in part to get better, and in part to ensure that the arts and sciences and the liberal arts remain a relevant part of the students' learning experience here." The committee established four SLO for general education. These four foundational learning outcomes are (adapted and retrieved from the website 2/1/2015):

1. Understanding different academic disciplines and the distinctive way of thinking in the disciplines.
2. Critical thinking—being able to analyze, interpret, and use appropriate information to solve problems through self-directed and self-disciplined thinking.
3. Written communication—being able to convey ideas and information effectively using appropriate means, including oral and writing skills, the ability to provide numerical solutions to problems, and the ability to use technology.
4. Global perspective—understanding the world and to be connected to it.

The committee determined that the CLA would be used to measure student achievement for critical thinking (#2) and written communication (#3).

The CAO Selects the Collegiate Learning Assessment

As the institution readied itself for the SACS reaccreditation, started developing its QEP, and made moves to revise the general education curriculum, the CAO looked for

[7] Taken from the Stamper College 2013-2014 course catalog.

an effective tool to measure institution-wide SLO, particularly in written communication and critical thinking. According to Betty, who was a mid-level administrator at the time involved in assessment, the institution needed an instrument in place for the accreditation process "to make sure we were in compliance and to make sure we got it introduced we started looking at our curriculum at the same time to figure out how we could improve things like critical thinking into our curriculum to help the end result of our students." Then something called the CLA came to the CAO's attention.

As a Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) member, the CAO received a letter from CIC inviting the institution to consider participating in the CIC/CLA Consortium. The Consortium began in 2005 when the CLA first debuted, and had received funding from the Teagle Foundation to expand its membership among CIC institution members for a second year.[8] The CAO, in consultation with the president, made the decision that the institution was going to do the CLA. Stamper College joined the CIC/CLA Consortium in 2005 and tested its first freshman cohort in fall 2005.

It was only afterwards that the CAO tried to determine how to get faculty to buy into it. According to Jen, a faculty representative, the implementation of the CLA in the beginning was "*extremely* top-down, extremely her [CAO's] idea, rather than a faculty agreement that this was something we felt we ought to do." Once the CAO decided that the institution was going to use the CLA, she brought on the Director of Institutional Research to execute the details. In what was considered a trial run of the CLA, Sara argued that she didn't need to get faculty approval, but at the same time she was not naïve to think that faculty support was unnecessary:

[8] For more information on the CIC/CLA Consortium, please refer to Chapter Three.

> I just kind of did it. But I did it very carefully. And leaked information about how great this was and how useful it was going to be to us. Again, it was all about getting the general education program in shape for SACS and we need[ed] to demonstrate that we are actually delivering on our student outcomes for general education, which is a notorious thing that we did for years—we said we're going to do all this stuff and we had no proof that we did it. And they started in the '90s to crack down on that a little bit.

Sara introduced the CLA gradually to very small groups of faculty allies through committees in which she herself was a member: "Then I began to introduce it into the committees because naturally I was a member of Curriculum Committee and General Education Committee" (and had appointed several of the faculty members onto them).

The first group of freshmen took the CLA in fall 2005, and then a group of seniors took the CLA in winter/spring 2006. When an institution purchases the CLA, a maximum number of 100 freshmen and 100 seniors can take the exam (anything beyond that incurs an additional per student fee). Because the institution didn't want the students who were selected for the CLA to think it was unfair that their peers didn't have to take it, the remaining freshmen and seniors were assigned a proxy test. This proxy was a sample CLA essay prompt. While individual student responses on the CLA are not made available to institutions, Stamper was able to collect student responses from the proxy test.

The quality of the student responses appalled Sara. In fall 2006, she distributed a sample of student responses from the proxy test to the General Education Committee, which was working on revising the general education curriculum. Sara recalled that "they couldn't believe how bad they were. And then I did it in the Academic Council [a group of Deans and Chairs] and then I did it in Curriculum [Committee]…. Well, the main purpose was to get their attention and it did. They could not believe that these were graduating seniors." Sara distributed these responses all the way up to the Trustees.

A Rebellion on Her Hands

Sara wanted to broaden the faculty audience of these responses to all faculty, so she chose a gathering during the Faculty and Staff (FAS) week in fall 2006 to do it. In a surprise move to faculty, Sara attempted to get them to take the sample CLA essay prompt and got a rebellion on her hands.

> Sara: They rebelled. They thought I was going to use it for evaluation; I was going to use it to fire people…. I got nasty emails and then I heard that a whole bunch of the faculty were in the main faculty building fomenting a rebellion and all so I said, "Mea culpa, I'm not going to do it," and threw it out.

By the next morning, she had diffused much of the tension, but this misstep made it harder to get faculty to see the CLA in a positive light. Sara confessed that it was "a hard, uphill battle" from there to get the faculty to accept SLO assessment. A former mid-level administrator involved in the implementation of the CLA also recalled the initial response of faculty to the CLA as "suspicious. I think that at any [place] that I have ever worked, as a part of the assessment process or evaluation process, there is always that sideways glance of trying to figure out well, are they trying to evaluate me as an individual, or where I'm teaching critical thinking or writing in my classroom, or are they trying to see this type of thing globally to the institution as in are we trying to focus writing for the entire institution."

Governance

The Massacre

To begin to tap into why faculty assumed that Sara, by trying to get them to take the sample CLA prompt, was going to use it for evaluative purposes, for punitive purposes, one has to understand a little bit of the history of faculty/administrator relations at Stamper College. The institution operates under a shared governance system. However,

what I learned through my interviews is that the current system of shared governance was not always the norm. According to several administrators and faculty members, the prior president (who had been president for twenty years) was "autocratic," "authoritarian." A few faculty members who described him thusly explained they did so despite being his friends. According to a faculty member who claimed friendship with the president, he remembered that he used to tell the president, "Will you please let these people [the faculty] vote on something?? Just something! Who cares?" As a result, the institution under his leadership operated in a top-down fashion. A significant event in this president's tenure—and relayed to me by several long-standing faculty and administrators at the institution—was starkly called by many as "The Massacre." The significance of this event is important to understand its impact on the collective faculty psyche and how it subsequently sowed suspicion and distrust amongst faculty toward administrators' motives.

The Massacre occurred in winter 1996, a decade before the CLA-induced faculty uproar. What happened, according to a historian (and faculty member) who published an historical account of the institution (2002),[9] was a "major restructuring of academic programs and a dramatic change in the on-campus governance system of the college" by a president driven by concerns over declining enrollment and the institution's significant financial difficulties (p. 324). My interview with Sara supported this claim. According to Sara, "The president [at the time] appointed a secret committee of faculty and administrators and staff, more staff than faculty. And came up with this grand transformation plan that was going to increase enrollment…. The essential plan was to

[9] This book is the only text that provides a history of the institution, and was written to commemorate the institution's 100th anniversary. It was presented to me by a senior-level administrator and mentioned to me as a suitable reference by other interviewees.

make a lot more money by attracting more professional students so you created this structure eliminating some majors without asking anyone, without doing any real research."

This plan resulted in changes to the academic core, a moving around of academic departments into five schools, altering the college's internal governance structure, and cutting faculty positions (2002:324). For example, courses were shortened from 15 weeks to seven weeks. The president announced these changes at a faculty-staff assembly, and Sara recalled how faculty received his pronouncement: "The reaction of the faculty was… they were stunned…. It was not even discussed. It was not even voted on." The plan went directly into implementation. According to the historian who wrote of this event, the faculty community at the institution was such that "a sense of commitment to the college and strong professional standards kept faculty and staff focused upon the greater objectives of providing quality teaching and services to Stamper students" (2002:326). So while there might have been some criticism, there was no uprising, no open rebellion. A senior faculty member shared with me her recollection of that time, "Well, I think again, being Stamper College, we gave it our best effort but it was very difficult…." This senior faculty member, when referring to "being Stamper College," addresses a general faculty mindset, particularly amongst the "old-timers" such as himself, where faculty dedication to the institution is such that they will go along with what the administration wants even if they have some doubts or if it creates more stress/work for them. One senior-level administrator attributed this mindset to the fact that a lot of the faculty are "rule followers." Sara corroborated this depiction of a faculty who did not rebel. In fact, it wasn't until a few years later that she said, "the faculty rose

up in rebellion and voted against it, but they could not have done that for the first several years; that was viewed as too negative or too hostile." She recalled that "There was a threat to sue the institution through AAUP, that attempt was made. But it was like living under an old Eastern European regime; there's no way you can organize, it's so demoralizing. It takes a long time for people to recover, some never recover."

Sara was a mid-level administrator at the time of the Massacre, and when she eventually came into her senior-level administrator position, she told me that it took years for her to rebuild faculty leadership and the faculty's self-image. Even then, some faculty remained on the defensive and their suspicions were immediately aroused particularly if they suspected that the administration had any influence on curricular proposals. In our conversation, Sara reflected, "Those things linger. Especially for long-standing faculty in ways that aren't entirely healthy," even when there are new administrators. She did not specify what exactly she meant by healthy, but in the context of the entirety of our conversation, it was clear that she thought faculty saw conspiracies or power struggles where she did not. A senior-level administrator, new to the institution in fall 2013, described his impressions of the faculty as "suspicious and tired."

Expanding Faculty Power After the Massacre

When a new president came to Stamper in the early 2000s, he was "much more focused on faculty input, faculty governance, faculty involvement and so forth," said a faculty representative who had been through the Massacre. This president encouraged the faculty to revise institutional governance at Stamper. In 2005, Sara along with another senior faculty member re-worked the governance structure to "give a lot of autonomy back to the faculty." They worked with a committee of staff and faculty in the re-design.

However, when the proposal for the revised governance structure went to Faculty Assembly for a vote, the faculty got upset. Sara remembered one faculty member in particular who stood up and said something like, "This is reminiscent of something that's happened here before. The CAO is trying to cram something down our throats." According to a few interviewees, some faculty then started yelling for a secret ballot, and the proposal was defeated. Added a senior-level administrator, "And we know how many people were present and there were more pieces of paper than there were people in the room… It was an attack on the previous president [the one who had initiated the Massacre]. It was attributing to us behavior that we had gone out of our way to demonstrate we didn't approve of, attributing it to us. So this is an example of the dysfunctionality of an organization when you have really bad and, frankly, Machiavellian leadership."

Maria, a faculty leader I interviewed, who was a new faculty member back in 2005, corroborated this lack of faculty trust for the administration. At the time, she recalled that the Faculty Assembly was

> …in the process of evaluating how we governed ourselves. And there was a little bit of a backlash against the administration because they felt like the administration had too much power. Now this did come at the point where there was more emphasis put on assessment, so I think that contributed a little bit to it. There were reallocation of resources and a change in reporting lines in different departments and that kind of contributed to a little bit of unease…. So there was this kind of thought that the administration had too much power over what the faculty were doing, that there were a lot of edicts coming down. And so there was a remodeling of the committee structure with the hope that more power was given back to the faculty.

A group of faculty leaders came together independently and, according to Sara, "created their own committee and rewrote the governance structure and it was essentially the same [as the one that was voted down] with a few changes," including ensuring that every

single department had representation on the Curriculum Committee. Two long sessions of Assembly meetings were held in 2006 to discuss the proposal. Maria clearly remembered that one session went for almost 10 hours and another session lasted about six. In fall 2006, the current structure passed.

I will use Curriculum Committee (CC) to illustrate how the governance structure changed. Among the committees in which faculty participate, the CC is generally considered by faculty as the most powerful. According to Maria, "Some of the committees were restructured to have a broader voice. So Curriculum Committee is probably the best [example]. Prior to this restructuring, Curriculum Committee had five or six folks on it, several of [whom] were appointed by the CAO. After the restructuring, Curriculum Committee had a representative from every department or school. So we had a much broader and larger committee, but you had an honest committee in the respect that every program and major was being represented." The change eliminated CAO appointments.

Unintended Consequences of Changing the Governance Structure

There were two unintended consequences of this faculty-led change. The first was a *loss* of faculty voice and participation, and the second was inefficiency in the governance process. According to a faculty representative that I spoke with, what resulted after the new by-laws were put in place was that some committees kept active while others did not. That is, committees were submitting fewer reports to Faculty Assembly. Maria claimed that this was "because the committees were doing less work. They really weren't taking charge of the areas that they…were going to be taking charge of. In hindsight, I think we went backwards." In fact, without the push of some senior-level

administrators to keep committees on task, to bring up larger issues, some committees didn't generate enough internal momentum nor had the leadership on the committee to keep up regular committee meetings. Maria explained, "So there was a lot more prescription of who would be on those committees. I don't think the goal was met. In other words, if the goal was to empower more faculty, what I saw with the exception of Curriculum, the faculty lost some power." Interviewees declined to provide specific examples of committees where this decrease in faculty voice occurred.

Other faculty I interviewed supported Maria's account and interpretation that faculty voices and participation were diminishing not only in committees but also in the larger gathering of Faculty Assembly. They pointed out that faculty members seemed to defer more and more to the reports and activities of the committees. A former Faculty Assembly moderator remarked,

> And nowadays, I think because of the by-law structure that we have and the way that curricular matters go to the Curriculum Committee (which is a very powerful committee), which reviews any kind of proposals, requests to change curriculum, to add a new course, to add a new program, to tinker with aspects of courses and programs and so forth, that the Committee works very hard and meets often for long periods of time and it basically vets those proposals…that's kind of led to a quiescent attitude on the part of the Faculty Assembly generally because everybody kind of thinks, "Well, Curriculum Committee has already looked this over with a fine-toothed comb, and it's probably ok, and I'll just vote yea."

A former member of the CC brought up this quiescent attitude as well. This member thought that because committees like the CC are so highly respected, it might be that the general faculty have almost too much faith in its integrity, resulting in what she thought was "faculty being less engaged in what [they put in front of] the Faculty Assembly." A current member of the CC started noticing this inactivity in the Assembly about three years ago. She sadly stated that "…[Faculty Assembly] has done so little" in the past

three years, and described how there is virtually no discussion when proposal presentations are made by committees; on the one hand, she commented that one could argue that that's because the committees are doing such a great job, but the other possibility is that "all these other people don't want to make any waves and don't want to cause any fuss over anything."

The second unintended consequence of the faculty-led governance restructuring is inefficiency in the governance process. The prescriptive by-laws created by faculty for faculty committees resulted in a situation where "…in order to make a change to the by-laws it's a rather rigorous process. It has to come from the faculty, through the Faculty Assembly [requiring a 2/3 vote], be vetted by the College Assembly—which is the staff and faculty assemblies together—and then taken to the Board of Trustees. I mean, it's a huge process to make a change to the by-laws. So the result of that is that anytime you need to do a little tinkering with the committees—their charges, who's on them and so forth—it's a major thing," said a faculty member of the recently formed Governance Review Committee. This committee, in fall 2013, was in the midst of overhauling the governance system approved in fall 2006. While these securities were put in place in reaction to the prior administration, according to Thomas (a faculty representative) and other faculty leaders I spoke with, it has made it challenging for the faculty on committees to make even the slightest change to the committee charges and memberships.

For example, illustrated Chris, a senior-level administrator who was new to Stamper in fall 2013 and had come from another small, private institution out West, the faculty Technology Committee isn't in a position to come up with a technology strategy or plan, but instead responds to paper requests for someone who needs new software; and

then, they only can prioritize such requests because they go on to the Business Office which controls the budget for academic technology. This faculty committee is not empowered to allocate money. Because faculty committees aren't unable to make decisions nimbly nor are empowered to make strategic-level decisions, they currently remain focused "at the operational and tactical level," making them less effective than they could be, explained Chris. So, he continued, this is a small example of a "governance structure here where we would be better off if faculty committees had greater flexibility in their charge and a greater focus on planning and setting strategy that then gets implemented either through the committee or through some administrative function, as opposed to the way that committees now currently sit which is that they largely do administrative functions."

A Quiescent Faculty Assembly

Faculty voice in governance occurs formally through Faculty Assembly (FA). FA meets monthly and attendance is required. An absence without a good excuse is "frowned upon," said a long-time faculty member.

Senior faculty members, when asked about how much influence, and how active, the FA is in governance, shared that the FA currently does not have as active a voice as it could, and this is seemingly by choice and not because any other group such as administration or staff are taking steps to quiet them. This goes back to the unintended consequence of the faculty-led change in governance structure. Outspoken faculty representative, Joe, described the FA as "disengaged" and the faculty as "too nice" (i.e. they are not inclined to ruffle anyone's feathers or take an opposing viewpoint); he proceeded to say that FA is a forum for faculty to give voice but folks don't seem to be

exercising their right to talk. Faculty who had been at the institution longer than ten years recalled a time when the FA was a place where lively debate and discussion occurred—over curricular proposals, for example. And these lively debates and challenges to the administration occurred even under the former president who was seen as autocratic. Reminisced one senior faculty member, faculty remained undaunted during that time and so FAs would often be animated, "quite contentious," and could go on for two hours. But in recent years, several faculty members said, faculty have been quiet during FA, and there has been absence of discussion and debate.

A faculty leader in the FA, recognizing this sluggishness, is trying to infuse more energy into the group. He expressed worry about the consequences of an unengaged, inactive FA: "Without a strong faculty, you're not going to have a college. You can have a strong staff, you can have strong administration, but if you have not the strong faculty of the day in and day out with the students, then you really don't have the college."

While the senior faculty I interviewed mentioned that the quiet might partially stem from the governance changes that they approved back in 2006, faculty interviewees articulated that this quiescence might also be due to the lack of a pipeline of future faculty leaders. Interviewees readily named and pointed out a cadre of faculty leaders on campus, but they tended to be faculty who had been at the institution for over 15 years. These are professors who, one senior administrator stated, "...are both perceived as, and act as, leaders among the faculty. They also tend to have the formal leadership roles in committees." Yet the concern, says Anna, is that "some of us older, crankier faculty members [laughs] we do kind of worry, 'Where is the leadership in these younger people?' " Anna, a former Faculty Moderator, shared an example of how she couldn't

find any younger faculty members who would put themselves up for committee positions, so "I'm a little concerned about people's willingness to engage in governance." The faculty elects their peers on to committees, but members need to offer themselves up for the positions first. Anna was not alone amongst the older faculty in her worry that newer faculty were not taking a place at the table in governing the institution. Their concern is rooted in a very strong sense of duty to the institution that is prevalent amongst the older faculty I interviewed and which they consider to be a core part of their culture.

When it comes to the current administration, outside of the CAO, faculty did not perceive that administration intruded in curricular matters. Even Joe, who was not apt in our interview to be complimentary of senior administration, had this to say about the administration and curriculum: "They leave that alone. They leave the curriculum to the faculty." Administrative involvement in curriculum is only to the minimal extent of trying to "meet a need in the marketplace," says faculty representative Adam, in which case they are more likely to point it out to faculty, not necessarily take it and run with it.

Faculty conceded that administration does need to be involved somewhat in curriculum for practical reasons—to secure resources, for example. Another faculty leader, Maria, supported the view that the administration's broader perspective, plus the power it has to approve resources and fund initiatives, gives administrators some role in curricular matters. But senior administration does not have carte blanche to make curricular decisions. According to a long-standing Curriculum Committee member, just because the president wants something to happen, "it's going to meet the same standards as everybody else and it's not going to be passed just because the president thinks it's a good idea." Everything goes to FA and then must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

And in this individual's recollection, the Board "has never turned down anything that I can think of in the last 20 years."

The Faculty

Until now, I have focused on events that have happened *to* faculty. I would like to take the time to focus *on* the faculty at Stamper College in their own words: how they describe their "faculty culture," how they articulate their roles and responsibilities as professors, and how they perceive SLO assessment's place in their work role and its impact on the work role.

There were over 70 full-time faculty members in fall 2013. I interviewed seven full-time professors who had been working at the institution anywhere from four years to almost three decades. I also interviewed a retired senior-level administrator who had served at the institution for over three decades, and who had begun her career at the institution as a professor in the humanities. These interviewees led their departments; had participated in the general education revision and implementation; were members of committees such as Curriculum, Governance Review, General Education, Academic Council, Tenure and Promotions; were former and current moderators (leaders) of Faculty Assembly; participated in the SACS reaccreditation; and helped develop and oversee the implementation of the QEP.

Faculty members and administrators I interviewed remarked that many of them have spent the majority if not all of their professional careers at Stamper, so there is the sense of stability in the professorial workforce and in the institution at large. Five of the seven faculty members I interviewed had served more than 15 years at the institution; the other two faculty members had served less than eight.

Being a Professor is a Vocation, Not a Job

My interviews with the faculty revealed a cadre of faculty that has a very strong sense of duty to the institution who believe that being a professor is not just a job but their vocation. In some ways, said a former senior-level administrator, the life of a professor can be characterized as a monastic life in how it demands so many aspects of oneself; there is an "…almost religious sense of vocation. Almost monastic at times…'Cause you make so many sacrifices for your students and for your programs, and people still do." This individual lamented that this institution-service orientation—this sense of duty and self-sacrifice—is changing, particularly among the newer faculty that she encounters:

> I just don't think it's a high priority and I'm not sure it should be, so you have a little more autonomy and a sense of dedication really not to the institution but to the profession. So no one goes to college now with the idea that they're going to stay there for the rest of their lives. That is a difference. I used to tell everyone that I was the last of a dying breed—cause I spent my whole career at one place.

When this administrator interviewed prospective faculty members, she looked to hire individuals who understood that one needs "to take responsible leadership and that includes participation on committees and doing the extra work you have to do at any institution if you're a quality member of the faculty, which you are absolutely required to do at small colleges. Everyone has to do more than one job and if they can't they don't belong there." Adam, a faculty representative, reiterated this theme: "…I think they have to understand that we're a small college…you can't just say that's not my job…You got to have this kind of generosity of spirit, I would say." And Frank, a faculty representative and a department chair, added, "To a young faculty member, I tell them that they can not just punch the clock. It's not a punch the clock job."

Some of the established "Old Guard" that I spoke with voiced a concern about a growing bifurcation between themselves and newer faculty who don't seem to internalize this sense of duty—of service to the institution—as an essential part of their professional role. They contrasted their institution-service orientation to others' self-service orientation. The faculty who had been at the institution for 15+ years brought this up repeatedly and, based on the similarity in phrasing, I surmised that this might be a frequent topic of conversation amongst them. Here is what a few of them said to me in interviews:

> Joe (at the institution over 20 years): there's a generation that what I call professionals versus employees. The professionals are, I think, the older generation who aren't in here punching a clock. The employees are punching a clock; they come in here…and there's a part of me that's almost a little envious, and there's a part of me that likes the way I was brought up through it—if you're asked to take on another responsibility, you kind of do it, or maybe they'll give you one course release. And these guys are like, "I can't do that. That's not a part of me. No. I wouldn't do that for that." They're just nickel and diming the school all over the place. We used to have faculty parties periodically throughout the year. The numbers are dwindling in that because the younger generation don't come. They don't come. It's all older people.
>
> Tryon (at the institution nearly 30 years): I think basically most of us feel that we are here to serve: to serve the students, and to serve Stamper College. And so generally when I am asked, if it is at all reasonable and conceivable that I can do it, then I do.
>
> Sara (at the institution 40 years): And more and more now you have younger people coming into teaching that don't have that sense of commitment and willingness to sacrifice, to better the institution.... It's a difference of generation.
>
> Jen (at the institution over 20 years): I would say we have about 20 people who strongly care about the institution as a whole as well as their own department and will work to make this better. We probably have 30 more who are very interested in their own department and will do everything they can to be wonderful teachers and researchers and do their job. And we have about 20…people who, if you ask them to move a piece of paper across the room, they would ask you how much extra are you going to pay me for that. A small college can't work if…if that becomes the dominant mode, a small college can't survive…. It's this middle group that sees "job" rather than "vocation."

Because I only interviewed one faculty member who had been teaching at Stamper less than five years, this characterization that there is a difference in how younger faculty versus older faculty perceive their role is defined by the more established faculty, but it was consistent across the interviews.

Adam shared that there is a newly re-formed Faculty Development Committee (of which he is a part), and that one of the things that it has discussed is that "we need to do a better job of bringing new faculty into the fold, from orienting them to the ethos of the college, so that they understand what our campus culture is, what our faculty culture is." It may be that this concern of the newer faculty not fully embracing the institution-service orientation may have contributed to the re-formation of this committee.

The Faculty is a "Family"

In spite of the generational concerns voiced by the more established faculty, when I asked faculty (and administrators) to describe the faculty culture, to provide me with characteristics that describe the community of faculty at the institution, almost every faculty member I interviewed used words like "collegial," "cohesive," and "community" to describe the faculty collectively. Again, I did not interview enough younger faculty members to establish whether this sense of family runs throughout the faculty or only amongst a sub-group. Stamper College and Redeemer College are the only two institutions in my study in which the "family" metaphor emerged to describe the faculty as a group. While it may seem that the "family" may be felt exclusively amongst the more-established faculty, two "younger" professors that I interviewed (they had been at the institution less than eight years), also talked about how they felt like a part of the community. Upon first joining the faculty at Stamper, Maria shared with me that "I felt

part of a team. It felt like family." When I asked her to expand on the family metaphor more fully, she explained, "There were deep discussions. We talked about things that we were passionate about just like you do with your family. And you don't, at least for my family, we don't always agree on [everything]."

And even if, as Maria disclosed, being part of a family means that you feel comfortable in disagreeing, a kind of diplomacy if you will, can overlay faculty interaction. I experienced it first-hand as a demeanor of graciousness and politeness when I interacted with some faculty, but I heard it in the diplomacy and cautiousness of their words when describing unfortunate events or describing less-than-favored individuals. When I probed this with Frank, a faculty representative who grew up in the south, he pinned it as "southern-ness," a way in which the faculty can be very civil and polite face-to-face, but that does not mean that they won't "find a way around the problem if we're strong enough." Another quality of this southern-ness, elaborated Frank, is that "…we are required to think about when is an appropriate time to complain…. Yeah, and not do it within a public arena but to do it much more privately." Faculty are respectful to one another, said another faculty representative, almost to a fault. Joe, who is an outspoken individual from the Northeast, expanded on this concept of southern-ness by characterizing the Stamper faculty as "not pushy" and "just too nice," and so they don't voice aloud their opinions as much as they should.

Another significant aspect of the faculty identity is faculty commitment to students and to student learning. Faculty described their primary responsibility to be teaching. A professor's own research agenda is not highly emphasized here; in fact, when I asked about "fit" between the institution and potential faculty candidates, several

department chairs and a dean remarked that an individual is not considered a good fit if he/she thinks research takes priority. As such, the institution places 50 percent of the faculty evaluation on teaching, 25 percent on service (which entails service on committees, taking on positions such as department chair, and even being active in the local community to advance Stamper's image), and the remaining 25 percent on professionalism (of which research is a part, but also attitude toward students and to fellow faculty members). Sara mentioned that Stamper regards active membership in the institution more highly than active membership (via research) in their discipline: "So small colleges really require dedicated professionals who are loyal to the institution but ultimately more loyal to the profession, *not* to the discipline." That is, they need to be more dedicated to teaching and to learning.

Their commitment to students entails not just caring for students' academic side but for the whole student. For example, professors work with Student Affairs staff to connect students with tutoring if they require it. Maria shared an example of the non-academic side of caring for students: "We really care when the students do well, we really care whenever they have problems going on, we work with them to get jobs and grad schools…I have a student whose father passed away this week and so we've been all sending her notes and other stuff. That's the kind of passion that I see everywhere around here; we're all very caring for our students." According to faculty, cultivating personal relationships with students distinguishes a small institution like Stamper from larger institutions. As a department chair explained to me, "…we really have to put students first. That's what's going to make us successful…. Because that's really why most of the students come here." Getting to know their students beyond just their academic work in a

course is the commitment faculty I interviewed willingly make. And because Stamper is not an elite institution, a mid-level administrator pointed out that the faculty meet the students where they are in their academic skills and not where faculty expect them to be: "I think that's the big key: that they're willing to meet them where they are rather than expect them to come to us. That's the difference."

According to Chris, a senior-level administrator, it is this commitment to student learning, this willingness to try initiatives that might help their students, that has resulted in the Stamper faculty considering things like the CLA, and to develop and use across disciplines institution-wide rubrics for assessing critical thinking and writing. Chris said, "Those are things that don't exist at a lot of places because it's so hard to win agreement" for a biologist and a criminal justice professor to agree on a common definition of critical thinking, but the professoriate at Stamper has "managed to work those things out largely because where there are a handful of strong, thoughtful, well-respected faculty leaders here who understand the importance of assessment and rubrics, and having some sort of, if not uniform, at least relatively common approach to student learning, and they have made those things happen." Another mid-level administrator agreed that it is this commitment to help the students that makes faculty open, for their students' sake, to try the unfamiliar: "We've got a LOT of people who want to be better…. Willing to go the next step, to try more, to do more, to be there for them, to explore different teaching strategies although that's becoming a little bit more stretched; we're getting a lot of people outside of their comfort zone."

When I asked whether SLO assessment plays any part in the evaluation of faculty for promotion and tenure, a faculty representative told me that the assessment in the

evaluation of faculty only has a tangential role if you are teaching a course that is tied to a SLO. For example, if you teach a course in General Education that is tied to a specific General Education SLO. Says a faculty member in the General Education Committee, "If faculty are teaching one of those courses with an outcome, they very well, in the course of their evaluation, may speak to the effectiveness of that, look at either student evaluations, or comment on student performance with regard to that, but it's not exactly a clearly identified or prescribed part of that evaluation system."

Also, assessment factors only indirectly in the teaching component in that faculty write class goals and these goals have to be tied to the learning objectives that a department/major has. If a faculty member is not meeting the SLO, says a department chair, then "I'm less concerned about them not meeting it than I am if the faculty member doesn't have a plan to help them meet it." Another department chair explained that this is "More of a factor probably is are they willing to develop these learning outcomes, are they showing a good attitude for getting classes that are critical thinking," and continues, "So I wouldn't say right now learning objectives [faculty here refer to "objectives" interchangeably with "learning outcomes"] are a major factor in evaluations of faculty. I guess adding…part of that may be because when we [the faculty] put them in we wanted to make sure that faculty didn't see this as a prescriptive, and any way, punitive thing."

The Expansion of the Teaching Role into Other Domains

Faculty mentioned the three "R"s when asked about the significant changes and challenges that have occurred in their role: recruitment, retaining students, and resources. Firstly, faculty oft mentioned the greater role that they are expected to play in recruiting students, specifically in attending admissions events, making personal phone calls, and

meeting with prospective students. With the increased emphasis from the administration on retaining students, faculty find that they are required to meet more frequently with students, and work more closely with retention and admissions staff. Finally, the ever-present challenge of limited resources cropped up in interviews, especially a frustration with trying to keep up with technology and equipping classrooms with technology.

Assessment is Part of the Professorial Role

Both Stamper administrators and faculty told me that the primary role of a professor is to teach and to be responsible for students' learning. Within this framework, some see that assessment—SLO assessment—is part of the professor's job. When Sara set out to embed assessment into Stamper, she did so believing that "…assessment is an integral part of teaching." By that, she meant that her conversations with faculty were not guided by whether or not SLO should be assessed, or if it was a professor's job to include assessment, but guided instead by discerning meaningful, useful ways to capture and improve student learning. While she realized it was a misstep to introduce the CLA in a blunt, top-down manner, she wanted eventually to have SLO assessment internalized and owned by the faculty so that it becomes "part of the teaching process. It should be part of, integral to, the learning process so that when you create a lesson plan…you have student learning outcomes, goals, and then you have a way to see if you reach those goals." Asserted a mid-level administrator involved in SLO assessment, "You know, assessment has become such a big part of being an educator and having an understanding of not just the numbers…But understanding assessment and how it actually allows you to be better at what you do is some of the exciting ways that it's moving."

Faculty, too, see this change in the professorial role, where emphasis is placed on them to develop and find ways to assess learning outcomes. As Jen said to me, "We have much more concern with learning outcomes today than we did when I started [15 years ago]." As a result, Jen continued, "it [teaching] is not as much fun" because it is harder to get "students to find the right stuff, trying to get them to think critically, trying to…squeeze them to try and get out…the same level of answer…" versus just lecturing and kind of presenting the answer, if you will. Assessments like the CLA have had an impact on the teaching enterprise itself, argued Jen, because "…it's [assessments like the CLA] part of the reason why I was telling you at the beginning [of this interview] we've gone from sage on the stage to a lot of student-centered instruction." But at the same time, Jen understood that it is "a role that I *have* to fit into, and I believe that, and I work at it." In that statement, Jen acknowledged that incorporating SLO is part of the job, assessing students is part of the job "so I don't think any of that is non-professorial." Other faculty, too, see how assessment has changed the teaching role.

> Maria: In fact, I've had conversations with faculty who, when I got here in 2005, seemed to be against the idea of putting a number and value on everything, who [now] whenever a new course comes in or a new program, they ask: "Where's the assessment?" So it's become ingrained. I've actually been incredibly impressed how quickly that's become ingrained. And, of course, when we have new hires, we tell them straight up we'll be gathering data.

Maria brings up an interesting point about how new faculty are immediately told that assessment is part of the job.

Divisions within Faculty in Accepting Assessment

Within Stamper, faculty and administrators see a difference in faculty response to SLO assessment between more established faculty versus newer faculty. Among the newer faculty, said Sara,

> Yes, I think they're less scared of it [assessment]. And I think they understand as everyone must that assessment is an integral part of teaching. And it's not something separate that's imposed. It is part of the whole process. I think that's the big argument we're trying to win: assessment should be in your mind from the very beginning—as you create your syllabus, as you create your student learning outcomes, your objectives for your class. At the course level, at the program level, at the institution level. I think that is self-evident. It is not easy so we like to try to find reasons to say it's not true. But ultimately assessment is integral to the whole process.

When I asked a faculty representative, Anna, which faculty members on campus seem more receptive to assessment, she said, "…I can almost say for certain that they are younger to mid-career faculty members who are eyeing administrative jobs. I think in some ways, maybe not all of them, but some of them see a focus on assessment as a way of moving, advancing into administration, some sort of administrative position. It often seems to me an interest in assessment also goes along with heavy involvement in governance and all the things that are administrative things." She, herself, nearing retirement, is more leery of SLO assessment:

> Anna: …it feels to me like it [SLO assessment] needs to be more intentional…I feel like we [faculty] need to feel more that there is a useful end product resulting from the assessment that we can concretely employ in our pedagogy to make us better teachers…. I don't think it's that we're unwilling to utilize the information generated by assessment to improve ourselves, I think it's just that we don't know how to, we don't find the information that's generated particularly useful to us though it seems to satisfy the accrediting body…. sometimes I feel that I spend so much time *proving* to somebody else that I'm successful at doing what I know that I can do well, that I don't have time for teaching [half laugh].

Anna sees all of the assessment activity as busywork—another administrative requirement, another educational fad.

Another trend that emerged through interviews between those who seem more accepting of SLO assessment versus those who aren't, are the faculty in professional programs in contrast to those who are not. Jan, a mid-level administrator in one of

Stamper's professional programs, explained that the faculty in professional programs are much more receptive to SLO and SLO assessment because they are already so familiar with it than their peers who teach in the traditional liberal arts. When I turned the interview toward the topic of assessment, her immediate response was, "Welcome to my world." She produced a very thick binder from a shelf, and referring to it, explained that it was her program's most recent accreditation document. SLO were color-coded throughout the binder so that they were linked and coordinated at the institutional level, program accreditor level, SACS accreditor level, the program level, and the course level. For Jan and all the faculty in her program, assessment is an integral part of their job.

Struggling with Accepting Assessment as Part of the Professorial Role

In my interviews with some faculty, they struggled with accepting assessment as part of their professorial role. Adam, a relatively new faculty member at Stamper, described how assessment has changed what he does:[10]

> It does impact how and what I teach because now I kind of feel like it is more intrusive, or annoying in the sense of, "No, that's not how you're going to assess the class. You're going to assess through these learning outcomes," and now I have to adapt my teaching in order to make sure that those outcomes coincide with what the learning outcomes are that have, not necessarily that have been dictated to us because we're able to develop our own learning outcomes, but again you're kind of filtering it through this idea of assessment…. it feels to me in some ways, restrictive and a sense of trying to regulate the learning process.

When Adam mentioned "dictated to us," he meant a feeling that faculty are being more managed by administrators, that they are increasingly being told what to include in their courses because it has to be assessed as part of the general education SLO. Adam expressed to me that he felt assessment is reductionist and does not respect the intricate dance that occurs in the classroom between the professor and students.

[10] Adam, while relatively new to academia, is *not* new to professional work. He is a male in his mid-50s who has worked in a non-academic, private sector setting for several decades before joining Stamper.

Because Stamper faculty identify themselves first and foremost as teachers, continued Adam, teaching is such an important part of their identity as professors, and "learning is so personal—between teacher and student. We really invest a lot personally in our students and I think the students really feel that and respond to that…[that the collection of assessment data] seems like it's not capturing the whole of the experience and that it is, in a way, it is depersonalizing what is a, to me, a very personal experience." He continued, "In some ways it [the requirements to have SLO and SLO assessment, to measure/quantify learning] feels intrusive….[because] it's trying to take this kind of classroom dynamic and put it into a report. And there are so many things that go on in a classroom that are not captured in tests or in data. Maybe there's a little bit of frustration with that as far as trying, as I say, a sense that we're, that there's a question about the value of what we do."

Adam is not alone in his thinking that assessment depersonalizes and constrains the professor. I asked, Jen, who earlier I mentioned accepts assessment as part of her role, whether she felt this: "Yeah, yeah. Somewhat. For instance, just the use of rubrics…a rubric kind of forces me to teach in a certain kind of way in order to be able to use it. It just has a kind of controlling influence on the way that I teach, so sometimes I feel hampered in doing what I want to do pedagogically speaking by the knowledge that I need to use this rubric in order to satisfy this accrediting body. I sometimes think I could be a better teacher if I had more independence, more autonomy, if I wasn't feeling kind of in a straightjacket of using these sorts of tools, devices, to generate assessment data." [NOTE: This department encourages faculty to use a common rubric in their courses to assess student writing.] Jen found the constraints, though, to be relatively moderate: "It

has to the extent that faculty are seeing that they've got to do something to try and make sure that their students do well on those things. It hasn't in the sense that someone is telling them specifically what they have to do."

But Maria argued against the idea that faculty have or should have complete autonomy. She said, "There's this myth that faculty has independence…. It's a goal that's unattainable. And it should be unattainable" because "a course that a professor teaches can be tied to another course taught by another professor and if the professor is teaching whatever she wants but the student leaves the course not knowing the foundations of what a cell is, for example, then it impacts later courses, impacts the student."

Building A "Culture of Assessment"

What did Sara mean when she said she wanted to build a "culture of assessment" at Stamper College? She referred to three main components: (1) framing the message of assessment to faculty as assessment to improve teaching and learning, and having them internalize it as an integral part of their professional role; (2) cultivating faculty to be the experts and leaders in SLO assessment on campus; and (3) putting structures in place to institutionalize and support assessment activities.

Framing the Aim of Assessment

Faculty understanding of SLO assessment and the CLA generally fell into two categories: (1) assessment for the purpose of accountability, and (2) assessment for the purpose of improving teaching and learning. For some faculty that I interviewed, these two aims overlapped.

Initially, the extremely negative reaction of faculty when they were asked to take CLA sample prompt occurred because they thought the CAO was going to use it to

evaluate them, to use it punitively. They partly believed this because past experience had trained them to be suspicious of the administration and they knew the CAO could be high-handed at times. But they were also reacting to an understanding that a central aim of assessment is for accountability.

First there is accountability to outside groups. From the perspective of administrators and faculty that I spoke with, the institution had no choice but to incorporate SLO and SLO assessment in order to comply with SACS. As a faculty representative bluntly stated, "The QEP and SACS were the outside motivators that told us we had to do it." From my interviews, some faculty seemed to think that "accountability" is simply a code word that harbors a distrust of colleges, and faculty in particular, by external stakeholders. So when outside groups enforce institutions to adopt measures like the CLA, the purpose is really to make faculty "prove" themselves as professors, to show evidence that they are doing their job effectively. Adam, a faculty representatie, explained that, yes, there is grumbling about assessment among the faculty in his department, but it's not toward the administration per se but more generally about having to be accountable to "accountability."

> Adam: [the grumbling is] just about where we are in academia today…. Well, just the idea that assessment has become kind of the trendy thing. And there are these types of pressures, I think, particularly on liberal arts colleges to "justify" what they are teaching and what their students are learning…. Yeah, the assessment is the questioning of what we do: "Prove to us that you're doing what you say you're doing."

In Adam's eyes, assessment captures such a limited aspect of the teacher-student relationship: "And I just think it's an indication of kind of a bigger assault on education and the value of education and the kind of institution of academia."

But the danger in faculty thinking assessment is only for accountability is that faculty think writing SLO and doing the CLA is only necessary for window dressing for the SACS reaccreditation, and once that is over they can go back to their usual business. But Joe recalled repeatedly telling faculty, when they tried to make this point, "it's not going to go away this time. These were student learning outcomes: this was here to stay."

Another way to look at accountability is that instead of accountability to outside groups, there is self-driven accountability to students and oneself. Said a former mid-level administrator, "I think the main purpose was to make sure that when we talk to our students we could tell them that we were doing exactly what we were saying we were doing." Said Chris, a senior-level administrator, about accountability, "Being part of a process whereby we self-regulate, are able to take stock of how well we're doing, and then respond and adjust…." And stated faculty member Tryon, "I think it validates our work here. I think it also helps to keep us on target. Are we achieving our goals?"

A second understanding of the aim of assessment is to improve teaching and learning. Much of the faculty discussion in this area had more to do with specific course assessments or program-level assessments rather than the more general institution-wide assessments. This is unsurprising because the challenge with CLA results (and this was said by many faculty across all five institutions in my study) is that the sample of CLA test-takers is too small, making it difficult for individual faculty or departments to use the results to inform any pedagogical changes in their own courses or programs.

But in thinking about the usefulness of assessments results more generally, Frank, a faculty representative, explained assessment to me thusly: "…assessment is for the purpose of the instructor to understand our effectiveness. And how the students are

synthesizing, gaining knowledge, and being able to utilize their…skills that they are building upon." But another department chair said, "I'd like to think that it's primarily for improvement of programs and so forth…. I would like to think that [it's] for curricular improvement…" but it feels like "it's just jumping through hoops—ok, so this type of data, this type of information, this type of performance is what is expected of us so we will give it to them" (the "them" being SACS and other accrediting bodies).

Yet at the same time that some faculty and administrators articulate that the purpose of assessment is to improve teaching and learning, they are careful to also say that it is *not* to evaluate individual professors. Joe asserted, "But we try to make it clear also that this [assessment] is not a reflection on you. You're not being graded. This isn't about your teaching." But this is a delicate message to balance, particularly when faculty think of teaching as their main responsibility and describe teaching as "personal," to say, on the one hand, that faculty can use assessment to improve their teaching, but on the other hand, not offend the faculty by suggesting that their teaching methods need improving.

There actually emerged a third aim of assessment that is particularly relevant for small, non-selective institutions like Stamper. Positive CLA results showing institutional value-add from freshmen to senior year, can be used by institutions to enhance their reputation outside of their region and can be a way to distinguish themselves in the field of higher education institutions. Explained a senior-level administrator, "Having some indicators to the outside world that even though you may have never heard about Stamper College or [our town], this would be a place where you could come and succeed…." And one senior faculty member shared that the president has used the CLA results as a

marketing tool when talking to prospective students and prospective donors: "…he says that Stamper College is more well-known outside of [our town] than it is here in terms of what we accomplish with student learning." A faculty representative agreed, noting that things like the CLA "certainly gets you a certain amount of publicity and notice, and people say 'Yeah, that little college is doing some good things. They're really performing at a high level.' It allows you to demonstrate, at least to people who know something about the assessment tool or whatever, that you're successful, that you're doing good things, so I think it's been good institutionally in that sense."

Administrators leaned on these unanticipated, positive CLA results as a lever to secure more faculty support. According to Betty, a former mid-level administrator who was deeply involved with the CLA in the early years, what really helped with obtaining faculty support of the CLA was that the institution's CLA results were good, and participating in the CIC/CLA Consortium brought more name recognition for Stamper among peer institutions. As Betty elaborated, "I think that was very helpful for buy-in at Stamper because of the fact that people like me were doing presentations at the national CLA convention;[11] we were part of it and ingrained in it and Stamper was always being mentioned. That helped with buy-in a tremendous amount." As faculty representative Jen described, "Once we began telling people hey, we're showing some of the best value-added scores in the country, we had more people buying in." I might have been relaying a far different story had the CLA results not been positive.

[11] Every summer, from 2005-2011, the CIC hosted a summer conference for institutions in the CIC/CLA Consortium. Each institution was invited to bring a team of three administrators/faculty (one of whom had to be the CAO). I attended all seven of these conferences.

Cultivating Faculty to be Experts and Leaders in SLO Assessment

After the initial, ill-conceived faculty introduction to the CLA, the CAO turned to a strategy of cultivating faculty leaders on campus to be assessment proponents to gain faculty support: "And the other thing I did very consciously and intentionally was to co-opt the good faculty…Other people that cared about [academic] quality and understood assessment." Among the senior faculty, Joe was one of them. Among the younger, newer faculty, Maria was identified as a promising leader. Of being "selected,"

> Maria: …so Stamper in 2005 was trying to become more comfortable with a culture of assessment. We were trying to build a culture of assessment. So you have two choices when you are doing this cultural kind of revolution. You can spend a lot of energy taking kind of the people who are settled and really trying to work with them to look at things a little differently, or you can take new people and let them kind of lead a resurgence. I fell into that new category….
> Me: And their [CAO and Joe] tactic, as you said, was to recruit new, fresher?
> Maria: New, fresher, and again they wanted to take advantage of those faculty who may have been here a lot longer but they were real passionate about teaching and they were the ones who could understand that assessment really made you a better teacher…They pulled some of the older faculty, but then again they concentrated on a lot of us in the junior faculty.

As a junior faculty member at the time, Maria felt "excited and empowered" that this trust was being placed on her to step up to take more of a leadership position, particularly with SLO and SLO assessment. The CAO asked her, along with three other faculty members, to take part in a CLA in the Classroom Performance Task Academy, a workshop for faculty on developing CLA-like performance tasks for their own courses.[12] She also attended CIC/CLA Consortium meetings, participated in on-campus discussions

[12] I co-created the CLA in the Classroom Performance Task Academy with a colleague in 2007 as a way to familiarize faculty with the design principles behind the performance task prompt in the CLA, and as a professional development workshop for faculty to develop performance tasks for their own courses and to design rubrics for evaluating performance tasks. By summer 2009, we had delivered over 30 workshops across the country to over 600 faculty and administrator participants (mostly faculty). One of the internal motivations for developing this workshop was the feedback we often received from administrators that they were having a hard time securing faculty support for the CLA. As such, my colleague and I often discovered that when we did these workshops, administrators tended to send their faculty skeptics.

about CLA implementation and CLA results, and became a de facto faculty CLA spokesperson to her fellow faculty members.

Once the waters calmed after the initial explosive faculty response to the CLA, beyond a core of enthusiastic faculty, overall the faculty adopted a more neutral stance to the CLA. Jen who has participated in the CLA in the Classroom Academy and might be considered a cautious CLA skeptic remembered the faculty response this way: "I would say nobody fought it [the CLA]. It was a very neutral response at the beginning." Among a few, though, there continued to be a feeling that assessment was being imposed on faculty. Maria summarized some of these feelings as she was hearing them from her colleagues, "I think they all felt like it was being imposed on them. Then the question is: Who is doing the imposition? Is it the administration here at Stamper? Or is it SACS? They thought it was SACS." She argued that while the "stick" of SACS accreditation requirements brought faculty on board, the administration (especially the CAO) had an agenda to push through assessment: "And you know in hindsight, I do know that the administration at some points when they ran against resistance they used freely that specter image of SACS sitting there with the sword of Damocles…. I do hypothesize that it was a very convenient specter that could be wielded as needed…. You build fellowship by identifying a common enemy, don't you?" A senior-level administrator admitted that one of the ways in which she stemmed any negative feelings about assessment from faculty was "to make that an attitude that was unfashionable to articulate publicly." And in a faculty culture of "southern-ness," where senior faculty describe their institution-service orientation, they would not counter what the administration was telling them had to be done for the good of the institution and the students.

And then, of course, as teachers it was hard for faculty to ignore the glaring evidence of those sample CLA student responses. Maria recalled her own response when she first read the student responses, "Looking at these students' work, and how they responded to certain prompts, coupled with the anecdotal stories, was really an eye-opener. Oh, wow, our students aren't really doing what we think they should do. They're not writing very well, they're not demonstrating they can think very well on this assessment." When faculty read those responses, said Maria, it "fueled the conversation that we needed to be much more intentional on how we laid those skills to students, how we gave them an opportunity to become better writers, better thinkers." And the CAO was quick, she said, to make the argument that it was not just the English Department's responsibility; the challenge would be for faculty to figure out how to extend writing and critical thinking throughout the years the student spent at the institution.

Meanwhile, Joe worked on making faculty throughout Stamper comfortable with SLO and SLO assessment, particularly on writing SLOs (for their courses, their departments, and institution-wide). He offered workshops to faculty on writing SLO. Joe broke faculty down into small groups and assigned them a "personal trainer" (his words) who helped them write SLOs for their academic unit. Sara remembered developing SLO as a step-by-step process from the ground up: "…when we first started doing assessment to get ready for SACS, we had to build…like most places we didn't have anything so we really had to start building a library, data, and so they would have student learning outcomes for their major or for their course and for the major for graduates…"

Institutionalizing and Supporting Assessment Activities

The consensus amongst the administrators and faculty I interviewed is that SLO assessment responsibility at Stamper currently is diffuse amongst senior-level and mid-level administrators, some key faculty, and a few committees. Thus, the jurisdictional boundaries of assessment are fluid. Kim, a mid-level administrator, stated, "It's not just the liberal arts faculty or the arts and sciences faculty. It's everybody's responsibility." The inherent challenge when responsibilities are not assigned to individuals, offices, or committees, according to Maria, is that "And when everybody is in charge of something, no one is in charge of it…. And [when we started the discussion around General Education revision and assessment], everyone says, 'Look my class or course does critical thinking. We write. Or, yeah, we do oral.' Everybody was doing it, but yet we had this data at the end, from the CLA, that told us no, they weren't writing very well." Even with the CLA, a faculty member recalls her initial response upon hearing about it was "Oh, that's something for someone else to worry about."

What administrators and faculty I interviewed agreed on was that both parties had responsibilities in SLO assessment and the CLA. But allocating those responsibilities is still a work in progress. Faculty had no issues with administrative involvement in SLO assessment because administrators have to respond to accreditors. Adam said, "Well, they [administrators] are [responsible] in the sense of understanding and oftentimes communicating to us what is required, whether it is through the CLA or through SACS…. they are helpful in communicating to us what the expectations are and helping us navigate it, helping us to perhaps restructure our approaches."

At Stamper, the Director of Institutional Research (IR) reports to the CAO and oversees the implementation of the CLA (the CLA is paid for out of the IR budget), analyzes the CLA data, and communicates CLA results to faculty, staff, administrators, the president, and the Board. Because of the central role of the IR Office in the CLA, it is important to understand faculty perception of the Director's role. The former Director of IR did not have faculty status and shared with me that this underscored her "outside" (her words) status with faculty. A few faculty members confirmed this divide when they explained to me that they perceived the IR office as not truly understanding the faculty viewpoint. But this faculty perception has altered with the appointment of a new Director who started in fall 2013. The new Director comes from the faculty ranks and has more expansive responsibilities than the prior director, indicating that assessment is taking on an even more prominent role in the institution.

Sara retired in 2011, and sometimes when such a larger-than-life figure leaves, that individual's initiatives may fall by the wayside. This has not been the case for SLO assessment. One could argue that Sara did an effective job in building a firm base of faculty support for SLO assessment and the CLA at Stamper, and embedding assessment initiatives throughout the institution. One could also argue that SLO assessment has only increased in importance and visibility for higher education institutions, and so the institution needed someone to serve in an expanded capacity.

A senior-level administrator involved in her hiring explained to me that the institution wanted to expand that role so that it was not just about collecting and submitting reports, but "someone that could come and interact with the faculty, that could interact with the other people across campus…." A senior faculty member expressed her

excitement at this new hire, commenting that the new Director of IR is an "experienced professor in her own right. In other words, she understands the academic side of the house—she's been there." Interviewees expressed hope that the Director would be an assessment navigator, someone with an administrative-level understanding of the big picture of assessment and could translate that big picture to faculty.

According to a mid-level administrator very familiar with the expected responsibilities of the new Director position, the Director has been charged by senior-level administrators with creating an institutional effectiveness plan for the institution so that, "we can actually articulate what it is we do, we can think about some of the ways that we do assessment. I think this institution does a lot of assessment but not necessarily a lot of the analysis of that data and discussion of the results. We want to be strategic in our assessment and not just do assessment for the sake of assessment." When I asked this mid-level administrator to express her vision for assessment at Stamper, she shared,

> My vision would be, if I had to tell you a vision, would be to have people understand why we do assessment, the value of doing assessment, and getting them on board and being a proponent of assessment so they embrace it and becomes part of our culture, that we are doing things because we're constantly looking to improve how we deliver our courses, how we teach students, how we provide services—everything from our operational processes on up. That all could be improved.

She and other assessment advocates at the institution—faculty and senior-level administrators—want to be more intentional and directed with the assessment results.

One step toward being more intentional in assessment is to create an Institutional Effectiveness Committee. This would create a home base for assessment at Stamper. This committee, according to a senior-level administrator advocating its creation, would look at the data so that an institution the size and low visibility of Stamper can make claims

like “As an institution…” or “All of our students….” Maria, as a faculty member who has long taken the lead on assessment at the institution, said the committee would “Give it [assessment] a place. Give it a place at a high enough level that it’s going to get the respect it needs.” The committee would be a mix of administrators, staff, and faculty such as the CAO, Director of IR, the Deans, the Director of General Education, the QEP Director, and Director of Student Success. They are the people responsible, according to a faculty member who would be on the committee, with “being sure that assessment is progressing and is continuous and on-going.”

From my discussions with the individuals who might be part of the committee, I gathered that a couple examples of the committee’s areas of oversight would be approval authority of a faculty’s SLO for a course, and decision-making power over institutional SLO assessments so the CLA would fall under its purview. The committee would also share assessment data with faculty, with the additional step of recommending next steps to be taken. One of the benefits of the committee, claimed Maria, would be to reduce the amount of work faculty, thus potentially tamping down any potential faculty resistance to the committee’s efforts.

Maria hints at what will be the next key step for the institution via the yet-to-be-formed Institutional Effectiveness Committee. And that will be to make specific recommendations to faculty. This is where, as one mid-level administrator stated, assessment can’t be punted to administrators but must be in the hands of faculty because the assessment results need to feed back directly into what the faculty is doing: “So we’re not even at the end when we talk about the CLA, we’re going to make another step. And I don’t think a lot of people know what that looks like or what it means or how it impacts

what they can do on the outside." Otherwise, assessment results end up in a hole, to the frustration not only of administrators but to faculty themselves who want to use assessment results to inform their teaching. This is the part—the next step of applying the assessment results—that Sara indicated is the most difficult: "I still think we have a very, very long way to go nationally in terms of using the results of assessment. That was closing the loop. I used to make myself sick saying it over and over again." She would probably approve of the development of the Institutional Effectiveness Committee.

When Stamper College had its SACS on-site visit in fall 2008, Sara said that a parting comment from their SACS liaison was that "this is a culture of assessment." And Sara reflected, "We were very much on the way to that. We weren't there yet, but to hear that was very gratifying. 'Cause at least we had, we had crossed the hump. We had gotten the critical mass on board." And it looks as if Sara's successor plans on building on Sara's legacy. As a senior-level administrator said to me, the next significant step in building the culture of assessment is to strengthen the organizational structures (i.e. committee powers) to "…create a context and a culture where people are prepared and excited about, and in a position to do something about, the data that they have access to."

Summary

With Stamper College, we have a case study of an institution where a top-down approach to introducing SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA was not received favorably by its faculty. Because of past experiences under an autocratic administration, the faculty created (with the new president's support) a governance structure that was much more collegial, and where faculty (through the Faculty Assembly) had a greater role in shared governance. Subsequent to the Massacre, they were inclined to be suspicious of perceived

administrative intrusions in academic matters. So when a strong-willed CAO used her administrative authority to try and press the faculty to take the sample CLA exam, faculty revolted, believing that the CLA results were going to used against them.

The CAO realized her mistake and quickly changed tactics. She took a more collegial approach by seeming to put assessment in faculty's jurisdiction, but was undeterred in her vision for improving academic quality at the institution, which included building "culture of assessment." She tried to bring about this culture through framing the message of assessment to faculty as assessment to improve teaching and learning, and having them internalize it as a part of their professional identity; cultivating faculty to be the experts and leaders in SLO assessment on campus; and putting structures in place to institutionalize and support assessment activities. These were still in play after the CAO's retirement, and the third element—putting structures in place to support assessment—were being expanded under the leadership of a new CAO with the hiring of a new Director of Institutional Research and the formation of a new Institutional Effectiveness Committee. What also worked in the CAO's favor is that the faculty at Stamper also see themselves first and foremost as teachers, with a willingness to try "new" things if it might help their students. And part of the faculty culture, especially among the more senior faculty leaders and representatives, is one of service and duty to the institution, trying to do what they believe is for the good of the institution, even though some might personally see it as more work, with no direct benefits to their work, or placing constraints on them. As a result, they were willing to give the CLA and SLO assessment a chance.

Grant State University:
Bringing Faculty on Board by Constructing a "Culture of Assessment"

Introduction

Grant State University (GSU) is a public comprehensive regional university located in a mid-size city in the South, offering degrees at the baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral levels. It enrolls over 5,500 undergraduates, and is part of a statewide system of institutions comprising more than 15 university campuses and enrolling more than 220,000 students. Unlike a traditional undergraduate campus, it was hard for me to locate a "center" to GSU, a building or green space or statue even from which the institution radiates, when I visited the institution throughout November 2013. Rather, there is a meandering feel to the institution, a sense that sections were added on bit by bit. There is no "main road" through which students or visitors pass in order to enter the institution. Instead, there are multiple points of entry. I was told by an interviewee that the prior president spent not insignificant amounts of money on campus beautification because she recalled the president saying, "How can we attract quality students when we don't look like we're a quality institution?" And the current president seems to have doubled efforts to bring new programs, new students, new faculty, and new buildings to the institution. According to the institution's website, three-quarters of the buildings at GSU are "new or newly renovated."

GSU is a case study of a CAO—well respected, trusted, and liked by the faculty—who enthusiastically brought SLO, SLO assessment and the CLA to GSU. In fact, in the CLA, he saw a game-changer in higher education assessment and wanted GSU to be at the fore of this movement. As at Stamper College, this CAO also articulated building a "culture of assessment." In a top-down, bureaucratic organization like GSU,

this occurred by collaborating with other administrators (and some faculty) at the institution to build an infrastructure that integrated SLO assessment and the CLA all the way down to the course level, resulting in the most detailed system of incorporating and including assessment from among the five institutions that agreed to participate in my study. Because GSU is part of a state system of higher education institutions, administrators and faculty were no strangers to accountability and reporting outcome measures. Even so, the CAO did not press heavily on faculty but tried to find ways to cultivate their support in the hopes that they would eventually do it not just for accountability's sake but because they would see how SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA could enhance their abilities as educators.

I first place GSU in the larger context of the state and state system. This is important because of the emphasis and pressures they are placing on SLO and SLO assessment in general education. Then I discuss how GSU is ahead of the game when it comes to SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA because of the CAO's early advocacy of them. I describe how the CAO brought in assessment to address accountability, but also messaged it as a way to bring about improvement in teaching and learning. I outline the structures he constructed to create a culture of assessment at GSU. I then focus on the faculty—how they understand and assert their professorial role in the institution, and the arguments faculty presented in support of, or against, the CLA and SLO assessment.

Background

Prominently displayed throughout GSU—in classroom corridors, in administrative offices—is the institution's mission statement, which states that its primary mission is to produce global citizens and students who will be future leaders in

the state. The institution's mission statement is printed on plastic business-sized cards and I saw them often on desks in administrative offices. This is symbolic of how the administration adheres to this mission statement; they make sure to place physical reminders of it everywhere.

GSU is not a Research 1 institution. Administrators and faculty describe it as a teaching institution, serving the needs of students who are not as prepared academically to begin college as their more selective counterparts in the system. GSU admits 55 percent of applicants, and 28 percent of those admitted enroll (NCES, fall 2013). Among the undergraduates, 59 percent are Pell grant recipients. Seventy-three percent of undergraduates are enrolled full-time. There are over 260 full-time faculty members, and more than 60 part-time faculty members (NCES fall 2013 data). The largest programs (based on the number of bachelor awards conferred in 2012-2013) lean toward professional programs and are Homeland Security, Law Enforcement (which includes Criminal Justice), Business, Psychology, Social Sciences, Education, and Health Professions (Nursing).

Governance

An SLO and SLO Assessment Agenda: The State System and State Legislature

GSU is one of more than 15 institutions that make up the state system of higher education institutions. A Board of Governors is the policy-making body that runs this university system, and its members are elected by the state legislature. A president executes the wishes of the Board of Governors, and this president and senior staff are known as the System Administration.[13] In February 2013, the Board of Governors

[13] System Administration is the head office of the system president and senior administrative staff. This core staff executes the policies of the Board of Governors and provides system-wide leadership in the areas

revealed a five-year strategic plan. One of the five goals articulated in the plan is the strengthening of academic quality; within this goal are multiple strategies, one of which is to develop and agree on system-wide general education competencies and have common assessments of these SLO in place across all the system campuses. The strategic plan recommended the CLA as one of these common assessments.

The Faculty Assembly, representing all faculty members in the system, provided input into earlier iterations of the five-year strategic plan. Responding to an earlier draft, the Faculty Assembly issued a letter to the Board of Governors and the system president a month prior to the February 2013 reveal. In it, they bulleted their major recommendations and concerns regarding the draft strategic plan. One bullet addressed the CLA (which I have adapted here):

> The recommendation for the use of a single instrument to assess student learning alarms us. Measures such as the CLA or other standardized exams, are not sufficient instruments to measure the depth and breadth of general education programs. In fact, institutional average scores on the CLA and similar exams are highly correlated with the institutions' average SAT scores; hence these instruments provide no new information (and add to the cost of our students' education). Therefore, the strategic plan must endorse the expertise and control of the faculty in selection of the appropriate method for assessment of academic programs (retrieved online from the System Administration website on 2/16/15).

System Administration pressed on with its pursuit of the CLA. When I interviewed participants at GSU in fall 2013, the System Administration had authorized the pilot implementation of the CLA+ for that academic year at five institutions, including GSU's. A member of the CLA Pilot Subcommittee is a mid-level administrator at GSU and she anticipates huge pushback from faculty across the entire system if the System Administration mandates the CLA. The CLA+ differs from the CLA in that unlike the

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of academic affairs, business and financial management, long-range planning, student affairs, research, legal affairs, and government relations.

original CLA, which uses the institution as the unit of analysis, the CLA+ now produces individual student results, including sub-scores in analytic reasoning and evaluation, writing effectiveness, writing mechanics, and problem solving.

Understanding the proposed increased role of SLO and SLO assessment throughout the state and thus at GSU necessitates a brief explanation of the state's political environment. Many of my interviewees were acutely conscious of the stress placed on higher education institutions by the governor, state legislature, and System Administration on measuring, collecting, and reporting data for the purposes of accountability and efficiency. By fall 2013 when I came to campus to interview, the state legislature had subjected the university system to five straight years of budget cuts. From 2008-2011, the system had more than $600 million in budget cuts, resulting in campuses laying off more than 900 people and raising tuition (local news channel website article posted 1/13/11). In 2013, the system took a hit of another $66 million in cuts.

Collectively, my interviewees conveyed a sense of anxiety in regards not only to their future but also to the future of their institution. They saw themselves and their institution vulnerable to the budget cuts, vulnerable to the data. The past few years had seen program eliminations at institutions, and one institution in the system was on the brink of shutdown in 2013. "I think politics is a huge driver in what we do and how we structure ourselves and how we sell ourselves," described a faculty member, "When the very notion that your institution could be shut down is on the table, based on nothing that you do or don't do, but based on something, a conversation going on totally outside of higher education, it makes us all feel very skittish and threatened, And also angry, I think." The institution has had to respond by becoming "more effective and efficient," according

to a senior-level administrator. An example of this is that GSU applies a system-wide funding model to determine faculty positions based on how many student credit hours a position generates. William, a senior-level administrator stated that

> It would be really difficult, I think, to find a faculty member who's been here for a year or two anyway, who's not aware of what we call the SCH:FTE ratio…Even the point where one of our computer science faculty members—on his own, nobody prodded him or asked him—on his own he built this little tool called the SCH:FTE calculator. So that any faculty member, any semester, can just go in that little tool and click on it and say ok. Obviously, what you want is a ratio of 1 or higher. Am I at 1? And if not, where am I. That's become part of the culture. I don't think that would have ever happened without the budget reductions and people understanding that as faculty positions, as we have to cut faculty positions, that we have to cut programs, programs that can show that in fact they're either producing more SCHs than required or at least they're at a ratio of 1.0, they realize that's important in this budget climate. A lot of these things, I don't think, would have taken hold had it not been for the budget crisis.

This data point has become a fixture in all GSU department reviews.

A concern voiced by a senior-level administrator with the system's data-driven, efficiency mode of operation is that it seems to have made GSU more business-oriented "because it's more like we're producing a product. And we try to do the best we can to input the best we can into that product." For example, several faculty and especially administrators mentioned the student credit hours. And a disheartening result of this, in this administrator's eyes, was that she didn't see the faculty working toward addressing the total student—the personality development and helping them "find" themselves component that is outside the bounds of academics.

In system-level meetings, GSU's senior-level administrators have presented on their experiences in developing SLO and SLO assessment, and on their knowledge of the CLA. When divulging to me that they had done so, they expressed pride that they had more experience in these areas in comparison to many of their counterparts in the system

and that System Administration had noticed. The senior-level and mid-level administrators I spoke with noted these achievements as a way of positioning themselves as ahead of the game when it comes to the academic quality component of the System Administration's five-year strategic plan. A few pointed out to me that they were involved in leadership positions in system-level committees to examine SLO and SLO assessment for all campuses in the state.

A Bureaucratic Institution

A clear line of authority runs from the Governor and the state legislature, to the Board of Governors and System Administration, and to senior-level administrators in the individual campuses to faculty. As senior-level administrators and faculty both relayed to me, they must follow the mandates as they come down from System Administration, who in turn must follow the mandates of the state political leaders.

GSU is a bureaucratic institution. There is a clear top-down structure in place. If in doubt about the structure, one only needs to visit the website to see the many organizational charts offered. As Vivian, a faculty member told me, "Really, we have a very clear chain of command." When the current president took office in 2008, she quickly established (or re-established) a "chain of communication." For example, faculty needed to talk to their Dean or with the CAO before taking an issue up directly with the president. Information flows from this chain of communication and faculty independently verified the chain by mentioning it without prodding.

According to the Academic Affairs website, the CAO oversees an Academic Affairs Office of half a dozen Associate Vice Presidents, four Deans of Schools and Colleges, and one Director of the Summer School and Continuing Education. Unlike the

small, private institutions that participated in my study, administrators at GSU are not "teaching administrators" in that they continue to teach courses while taking on administrative duties.

In keeping with the "chain of communication" established by the president, a mid-level administrator explained to me that he communicates to the chairs in his college and not directly to faculty. This is because he wants faculty to look to their chairs for information, and not to him. This administrator meets with the chairs every two weeks and in those meetings distills and conveys information from senior-level administrators. The way in which the he keeps in contact with faculty is by hosting a voluntary Town Hall meeting every month for all faculty in his college.

The sense from my faculty interviews is that the current president delegates appropriately and does not micromanage like the previous president. The president views herself first and foremost as a faculty member (which the prior president was not), and this has made a positive difference for the faculty, said a senior-level administrator. Kim, a professor, described leadership as a "benign authority, not Leviathan type of authority." When asked to describe senior-level leadership, Jerome, a mid-level administrator, outlined a leadership style that is not prescriptive and doesn't tell faculty what they should do. He used their involvement in assessment as an example of this style.

> Jerome: They give people the autonomy to make the decisions that are in the best interest of their programs. And so in that sense I didn't mean to say that they're not involved or engaged or that they don't want that to happen. But that they are very cognizant of trying to… trying not to be too hands-on and micromanage. So that's the key thing. They're avoiding micromanaging while making sure that assessment is, indeed, happening. Because that's one thing. It's certainly not optional that we are assessing for continuous improvement. Nor should it be. We should be doing that.

Jerome points out faculty autonomy operating within a bureaucratic structure that mandates assessment. He seems to indicate that while the administrators exert administrative authority (i.e. faculty will incorporate SLO and SLO assessment), faculty has flexibility, using their professional authority, to determine how that will happen.

There is a tension here between administrative authority and professional authority operating within a bureaucratic model of organization. Karen, a senior-level administrator, stated at one point in the interview that the president doesn't interfere in academic matters, yet went on to describe an incident where the president did just that because the president thought it was "necessary." The incident involved a student internship program where researchers hosting the program gave the president feedback that GSU students were not as competitive as their peers from other institutions. The immediate result was that the president stepped in and conducted a review of the relevant programs on campus. While Karen stood by the belief that "…the president and senior administrators have no business trying to tell faculty anything about academic matters," she used this incident to illustrate that there is an appropriate time and place for senior-level administrators to interfere and that the "interference won't happen unless there is a problem whereby something that needs to be done isn't happening and even then will go through the proper channels." That is, administrators, too, go through the bureaucratic structures established in order to take appropriate action.

What one mid-level administrator, Scott, who has been in higher education for several decades, noted is that the era of faculty governance is over. It is shared governance, with an increasingly prominent and influential role being held by non-academic administrators.

> Scott: One of the challenges in academics you learn as you move up is that too many decisions are being made by non-academics. You take the President's Cabinet. I think this is a new development in higher education. It used to be the CAO was second in command. And the CAO told other people what to do. Now, the CAO is just one voice among many. So when the Cabinet meets, there's like 13 Vice Presidents. And the CAO is just one.

Scott took on a protective tone toward the CAO when he started describing the equal footing the CAO is accorded with the Vice President for Student Affairs or the Vice President for Institutional Advancement in the Cabinet. He felt that it is symbolic of the diminishment of Academic Affairs' power in the governing of the institution. When I asked a mid-level administrator what she believed contributed to this growth in the power of the non-academic administrators, her response was "I think the demands for reporting and accountability that come from the University [she refers to System Administration] and the general public."

A Divide Between Administrators and Faculty

Most of the administrators I spoke with were originally GSU faculty, which is not surprising because I invited administrators to participate in my study who were involved in academics and assessment. The academic administrators and faculty acknowledged a divide between them, necessitated by the difference in their roles, and not due to animosity or distrust.

> William (senior-level administrator): I think that, again, like at any institution, the administrators by definition are evil and they're the enemy and all that [and that characterization happens because] I really think it comes down to the fact that as administrators, we have to be bureaucrats at times. Sometimes… "I'm sorry to be a bureaucrat, but I've got to be a bureaucrat right now. We've got to follow this policy. We don't have much choice."…. I think because administrators have to be the regulators at times, have to be the bureaucrats, and because we do have to think about budgets. I have to think about the perception of what we do in the eyes of the public, in the [System Administration], whereas other people don't have to worry about that too much. I think that's where the friction comes from.

> Susan (mid-level administrator): I think every faculty member, well, views administration with ambivalence because on the one hand by and large, administrators are still people who have come from the faculty ranks so there's a certain collegial identity there. On the other hand, the role of administrators is so different and they can get so disconnected from what goes on in the classroom that faculty and myself often feel that, or felt that, administrators really don't know what's going on, and they lose contact with the perspective of the instructor and of the student. Yeah. So that feeds into all sorts of stereotypes about out of touch administrators. Or, administrators who are interested in issues like reports and paperwork and, in the last 10 to 15 years, assessment and that sort of thing. I'm probably guilty as charged. I started out with that.
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> Scott (mid-level administrator): They don't see what I do. I'm a major faculty advocate in meetings at the higher level. One of the reasons that I really enjoy administration is that I felt like I'm in the room when decisions are being made, and I've been able to voice the faculty's perspective and fight for them and defend them in many situations. But no faculty know that. They don't see that. All they see is directives that I come down with or rules that I…so they see me as a company man, administrator, and don't necessarily see who I am.

Linda, a senior-level administrator and former faculty member, framed the distinction as administrators "make sure that the university continues to thrive and survive in an atmosphere of constantly changing budget circumstances and situations," whilst faculty are "kind of sheltered from all the problems that the institution may be trying to overcome." The common strain that I gathered from these comments is that faculty push against this administrative authority, and even senior-level administrators feel the constraints of System Administration administrative authority.

Although administrators articulated a divide with faculty, they did consider their relationships with one another to be friendly and collegial. The CAO is very highly regarded and liked by administrators and faculty. He has spent nearly 30 years at the institution, starting as a faculty member, then rising to chair, obtaining tenure, becoming dean, and finally CAO. Faculty indicated that they felt he encourages them, listens to

them, and makes every effort to be as transparent to faculty as possible. Said Vivian, a faculty member who considers the CAO to be a mentor,

> [The CAO] has meetings, open faculty meetings where he does these very detailed power points and explains everything going on and takes questions. I think that's unusual, in my experience. I've been here for five presidents and this is the first administration where that has happened. I'm not sure that that will continue to be the case someday when they [the current senior administrators] are no longer in charge, but I would say they make a big effort to communicate with faculty. They're always at Faculty Assembly meetings, or the CAO is always at Faculty Assembly meetings. He responds.

Faculty representative, Richard, characterized the administration as very "open" to hearing from faculty and thought that "…the strength is that the administration listens to faculty. I think that's one of the greatest strengths." Another faculty member described the high level of trust she has with the chair, dean, and CAO: "…we know each other very well. In terms of boosting and promoting student learning, this size and this kind of relationship between the administrators and faculty members particularly, that is the best environment and the best setting, I believe."

Faculty Assembly: Professional Authority Defers to Administrative Authority

Faculty members voice their concerns and issues through their elected representatives on the Faculty Assembly (FA) or through the Academic Affairs Office where they are represented by the CAO, their dean, and their department chair. Those who are a department chair and higher are not designated "faculty member" for the purposes of the FA. The FA elects its own chair and its officers. Sitting on the FA are representatives from every department in the University, and within each department, the number of representatives depend on the number of faculty. The following committees are under the Assembly: Academic Affairs, Budget and Planning, Student Affairs,

Governance, Information Technology & Telecommunication, Faculty Welfare, and Faculty Evaluation and Development.

The FA's primary purpose, articulated Richard, a faculty representative on the FA, is "for the governance of faculty, to make sure that faculty voice is heard, that we are implementing, or we are the driving force behind the policies that govern us." The Executive Board of the FA meets about a week before the monthly FA meeting to set the agenda. The Executive Board consists of the chair, the vice chair, the parliamentarian, the secretary, and the chairs of all the FA committees (the chairs of the committees are always Senators). Because the CAO always gives a report, he is always on the agenda.

According to the two FA representatives that I interviewed—Richard and Matthew—the current issues featured prominently on their agenda are tenure and promotion criteria. Matthew explained that this is due to recent economic hardships faced by faculty at GSU: "…because we are being asked to do so much more with so much less, it's greatly infringing on the ability and resources for travel and faculty development. And that greatly impacts tenure and promotion. That is a concern." Additionally, the FA is trying, continued Matthew, "To find those parts of it that are standard and core to everybody and have those outlined and then look at the individual criteria for those fields that are so vastly different."

Faculty I interviewed characterized FA as active and influential, and they said that the administration paid attention to the FA and seemed willing to genuinely consider their input. But what they might want is always balanced against mandates coming from System Administration.

> Richard: But still, most of the time the president and the administrators will not do it if we are adamant about something and we know we definitely do not

> approve this, then most of the time, the majority of the time, they will leave it. Unless it's something that comes down from the System Administration, and then if it's already approved at that particular level, then we complain about it, we can say whatever, but that's the way it is. But if it is something just pertaining to the University or evaluations or whatever, then the majority of the time when we disagree on something, they will look at it. We might have to do a little compromise and a little bit. They might say, "Well, will you consider this? Or consider that?" Or we might go back and forth with it until we come to an agreement that we all can agree upon.

This is when faculty professional authority defers to the System Administration authority.

If there was a criticism levied at the group, it was that the FA tended to focus on relatively minor rather than substantive issues. This was a point mentioned by several administrators. The culture of the FA for the past 15 years or so, according to one senior-level administrator, has been more of a place to air complaints rather than a voice for action. For example, according to Karen, the FA is where conversations about the impact of the CLA or what the institution should do next in terms of outcomes assessments should be happening, but the faculty aren't engaging in these conversations, even though administrators keep the FA informed about matters like the CLA: "When we talk about implementing a major initiative like the CLA or anything, we go to the Faculty Assembly." And the CAO has diligently kept the FA informed of CLA activities in his FA reports. Administrators seemed to *want* faculty to be more engaged in these kinds of discussions. Karen expressed some disappointment that the FA doesn't seem to focus on the "big picture," visionary issues for the institution; she described the group as "parochial" because it tends to focus on the ordinariness of their day-to-day needs. She placed the blame for this on the prior president who was dictatorial, "So faculty didn't have a perception of themselves as being able to make a sea change, because they weren't allowed to do that. See. You had an administrative side that inhibited their development."

But I wondered to what extent this was shaped by the fact that faculty felt that their decision-making power was constrained by the bureaucratic system in which they worked, that they really felt that they couldn't determine the direction of the big issues in a bureaucratic organization, so they might as well focus on the smaller ones.

To see what she may have meant, I conducted a cursory content review of the FA meeting minutes from 2007-2013 (posted on the institution's website). Most of the minutes showed that the president, CAO, and deans present big picture issues such as the strategic plan (both at the institution and at System Administration), the budget and its implications on hiring faculty, the Core Curriculum revision (which happened outside of the FA and will be discussed in another section), but the minutes suggest more presentation and little discussion. Meanwhile, the minutes offered a glimpse into what might seem typical of faculty meetings: committees reporting, updates on the Faculty Handbook revision, faculty concerns about the impacts of budget cuts, the lack of professional development money, consideration of an Emeritus Professor proposal, etc. A mid-level administrator expressed his frustration with the FA's focus on what he considered non-substantive issues:

> Scott: You got a Faculty Assembly, but gosh they fight and work with the most ridiculous issues and don't deal with real substance of the faculty job. I mean, they wrote a whole new Faculty Handbook, and they're afraid to address the issue of faculty teaching load. They just copy what was always there. Rather than…they had a real chance to transform the University, and they were afraid to do it.

Linda (a senior-level administrator and former faculty member) agreed with Scott. She said that faculty at GSU generally aren't of the mindset where they look around and consider, "…how can I make this University a better place? How can I make this University a better example of what universities should be?" Instead, according to Linda,

they are primarily reactive in that they respond to suggestions from senior administrators: "We have to kind of bring it to their attention…. Faculty here do not tend to come up with things, ideas on their own, especially in terms of governance. The administration, for example, starts the review of faculty evaluation. We had to say, 'Well, is this instrument, that's been here since 1982 when we first started the Faculty Assembly, satisfactory to you?' " The general tone of the FA, as I gleamed from my conversations with administrator and faculty representatives, is that it is relatively compliant to administrative authority.

Constructing an Assessment Culture

To put the CLA at GSU in context, it is important to understand that the CLA was part of a series of events that happened about the same time: a Core Curriculum revision (general education) that was implemented in fall 2013, preparation for GSU's 2011 SACS reaccreditation, and the development of the Quality Enhancement Program (QEP) for reaccreditation.

No Strangers to SLO and SLO Assessment

The five-year strategic plan adopted by the Board of Governors in 2013 included a focus on establishing SLO and determining an appropriate SLO assessment to use across the institutions in the system. This focus signaled that assessing SLO was going to be a fixture, at least until 2018 (the end of the five-year period). Since the financial crisis in 2008, state institutions like GSU were getting squeezed pretty hard; explained a mid-level administrator, "And so as budgets began getting tighter and tighter, and legislators began looking closer and closer at the return on investment for the funds that were going to different state-funded schools, there was *much* closer scrutiny given to what are the

outcomes of these different programs, especially if cuts had to be made which unfortunately were needed in some cases." For GSU, which had been administering the CLA to its students since 2007 and embedding SLO and SLO assessment into the institution for almost as long, this was familiar territory.

The importance of collecting and using evidence to make decisions, and establishing and fulfilling SLO is reiterated from the head of the institution to the staff and faculty. According to a senior-level administrator, when the new president took the helm in 2008, she said, "I am not going to fund anything, any new initiative, from any faculty group, any department, if it's not evidence-based." To show her commitment, she set aside $500,000 for faculty development and, working with the CAO, targeted the money toward workshops and activities that would have an impact on SLO, and that would train faculty to take an evidence-based approach to teaching and learning. The president and CAO led faculty development workshops on these topics and, according to a senior-level administrator, "they [the faculty] began to understand that if we want resources as a department or as an academic program…the only way that we're going to get them [laughs] is a way that demonstrates evidence. An outcomes-based approach." Accordingly, under GSU's strategic priorities, 2009-2014, the first priority addresses increasing retention and graduation rates; one of the ways the plan states this will happen is through the improvement of academics and co-curricular programs: "GSU will continuously improve teaching, academic support, faculty and student collaborative research, and co-curricular programs to enhance student learning (retrieved from the institution's website on 3/20/15). One of the "accountability indicators" listed to

determine whether this initiative is being met is that GSU will "achieve an average score of 'above expectation' by seniors on the Collegiate Learning Assessment."

Where assessment is located within the institution can say a lot about the relative importance of the assessment at the institution and can establish legitimacy for the assessment in faculty's eyes. At GSU, assessment is driven and managed by the Academic Affairs Office and not an Office for Institutional Research. This is not necessarily usual for higher education institutions. I mentioned earlier that the System Administration in fall 2013 authorized a pilot of the CLA+ with five institutions, including GSU. But according to a mid-level administrator participating in the system-level CLA+ Pilot Subcommittee, "In this pilot, GSU is the only school where the CLA is run out of an academic department—[his unit]. Every other institution, they're run out of Institutional Effectiveness or IR. And I think that says a lot about how it's been perceived and adopted at these institutions."

The importance of SLO and SLO assessment at the institution, and the high degree of emphasis placed on them, is clearly indicated on the Academic Affairs Office homepage on GSU's website (viewed on 2/15/15). It lists seven goals and outcomes, and the vocabulary of learning outcomes and assessment is invoked from the very first goal which is "Student Learning: To promote relevant and significant learning." Two of the five outcomes for this goal are the assessment of the core learning outcomes and the assessment of student learning in degree programs.

Folks in the Academic Affairs Office with whom I spoke laid out for me the ways in which they have deliberately set out to institutionalize assessment. Described a mid-level administrator: "…how can we get the faculty to the point that when [a key figure in

the office has moved on]…that [the faculty] will rise up and say to whoever comes next with the next best idea, that 'No, we're not doing it this way. This works for us, we know how to do it. It tells us worthwhile information. Unless you come up with something that answers some really critical questions, yes, we want to keep doing this.' " Thus the Academic Affairs Office has worked to provide a structure and common language of understanding, collecting, and sharing assessment data through the establishment of the Report for Continuous Improvement (RCI), the Operational Plan and Assessment (OPA), the Quality Enhancement Plan (focused on helping students make evidence-driven decisions), the CLA Institute, faculty development workshops and seminars that address assessment (especially for new faculty).

Embedding SLO in the Revised Core Curriculum

The Core Curriculum (general education) revision began in 2004. A group of faculty attended an Association of American Colleges & Universities summer institute on general education, and that is how they started becoming familiar with the "rhetoric of learning outcomes and assessment," said Susan, a mid-level administrator who helped lead the revision process. The Core Curriculum falls under the responsibility of the Dean of GSU College and not under the Faculty Assembly. GSU College is where all GSU students are placed before they are admitted to a degree program in the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Business, or the School of Education. Therefore, all students at GSU must meet the Core requirements. The Dean made regular visits to the FA to keep them updated on developments, and the Core Curriculum eventually required a FA vote in order to pass before being implemented in fall 2013.

The core used to be based on a series of courses. For example, a student would take an English class, a critical thinking class, a math class. The revised Core is no longer designed around courses but on SLO. By fall 2007, groups of faculty came up with a set of eight learning outcomes. One of the Core outcomes is Communication Skills, defined as students being able to "understand, analyze, and evaluate the effectiveness of different forms of written and oral communication. They will produce original written and oral communications that display organization, clarity, and documentation for a targeted purpose and audience" (adapted and retrieved from the GSU website, 3/27/15). Each of the eight outcomes has courses that can be taken to fulfill it. There is one faculty advisory committee (run by faculty) for each of the eight Core learning outcomes. These advisory committees develop courses, review courses, and help establish and review standards for assessment. The chair for each of these committees participates in the Core Curriculum Committee (CCC), which is led by the Dean of GSU College. Currently, the advisory committees are trying to loop SLO and SLO assessment back to teaching and learning, though how this will happen is still amorphous stated a faculty member of the CCC. Two individuals who were deeply involved in the Core revision process mentioned that in the previous SACS accreditation, they "dinged us" on not aligning the Core requirements with the Core SLO identified. So from about 2010 to 2012, the committees worked on improving this alignment. Much of this tighter alignment occurred through development of the course certification process.

A good example of GSU's process-driven mode of operation and its commitment to assessment is in the course certification process overseen by CCC—applicable only for the first-year courses. If a faculty member has a course that she thought met the

communication skills outcome, for example, then she would submit that course for certification. She would have to show how the course addresses the outcome, and what assessment is going to be used to determine whether the student mastered the outcome. An assessment plan has to be in place in order to get certified. And in order to obtain certification, a course undergoes multiple reviews and needs to be signed off by each reviewer. A mid-level administrator who oversees the Core Curriculum explained, "We actually have a process of putting Core courses on probation if we don't get assessment data from them. We can place them on probation and they can be de-certified if they don't produce assessment data." According to one of the senior-level administrators who signs off on these courses, "Certification means that your syllabus is looked at, your textbooks looked at, your assessments are looked at, and…how can we see the outcome in this course? In the instruction? In the assessment that you've given?" Instructors can use CLA tasks developed by their colleagues in the CLA Institute for the assessment component (more on this on p. 150).

Senior-Level Administrator Considers the CLA a Game-Changer

The CLA came on to the CAO's radar (he actually did not become the CAO until 2008, but was a senior-level administrator in the Academic Affairs Office when he came upon the CLA) because of a letter he received from CAE (the developer of the CLA) inviting institutions to participate in a longitudinal study funded by The Lumina Foundation. It was to start in fall 2007. The Core Curriculum revision was well underway, so thinking about SLO in general education and ways to assess those outcomes was on his mind.[14]

[14] This longitudinal study eventually provided the data that became the basis for Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa's book, *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses* (2011).

William's responsibilities as a senior-level administrator included oversight for all the programs for entering students, such as the Core Curriculum, academic support, TRIO programs, etc. To learn more about the CLA, William signed up for a webinar. He shared with me his first impressions about the CLA.

> William: I guess the two things that struck me about the CLA was (1) it was a much more effective assessment than what we'd been using for general education and I felt that, I believe that, because it was not multiple choice and that students actually had to write, they had to construct responses…. And I thought also as we were thinking about general education, and assessing general education, it struck me that the CLA was getting at skills in terms of written communication and critical thinking, analytical reasoning, decision-making. It was getting at skills that we knew were *crucial* to general education.

William introduced to FA the idea of using the CLA to replace GSU's current multiple-choice rising junior exam, and the FA voted to approve its use. He didn't indicate that there was much discussion over the proposal nor that any concerns were raised. The first GSU students took the CLA in fall 2007.

Institutionalizing the CLA through the Quality Enhancement Plan

Shortly thereafter, GSU began to prepare for the SACS reaccreditation coming in spring 2011. One of the requirements for SACS reaccreditation is that the institution must submit a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). According to the SACS website, "The QEP describes a carefully designed and focused course of action that addresses a well-defined topic or issue(s) related to enhancing student learning" (retrieved from www.sacscoc.org, 2/4/15). GSU's focus was to help students make evidence-driven decisions, an effort to help improve students' critical thinking abilities. As one senior-level administrator, who headed up the accreditation process, explained to me, "It's all about that SACS Standard 3.3.1…. [This is] the one that throws most institutions for a loop because it is the standard that addresses institutional effectiveness," how one sets goals, measures

progress toward achieving those goals, and uses the results of assessment for improvement.[15]

However, William insisted to me the importance of not sending the message to faculty that the *only* reason for SLO assessment is to satisfy SACS: "…a lot of this was initiated by SACS, but what we've tried to say even while we were preparing for SACS is 'Look folks, we don't do *anything* for SACS. Everything we do is to become a better institution. And if it happens to satisfy SACS, well, good.' " According to a senior-level administrator's memory of the prior two accreditations, they were seen as just something to get through and then promptly forgotten once the accreditation happened (almost identically echoed by administrators at Stamper College); and this is not what the leadership wanted to happen this time.

Administration made certain to saturate the campus with the QEP's message and so posters detailing the QEP are posted throughout campus buildings. In all my interviews with administrators, every single person mentioned the importance of making evidence-driven decisions and cultivating a "culture of assessment." Faculty, too, in my interviews were very aware of it. Because the QEP focuses on improving students' critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills to make evidence-driven decisions, GSU developed three professional development pathways to provide faculty and staff with strategies to develop and assess this. The three pathways are (1) critical writing, (2) information literacy, and (3) critical thinking. Once SACS approved the QEP in the 2011 reaccreditation visit, GSU began implementation of the QEP, and hired a director to oversee all QEP activities.

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[15] For more information on SACS Standard 3.3.1, please see p. 84.

Getting Faculty Involved: The CLA Institute

William wasn't content to stop at just implementing the CLA. He enthusiastically participated in the next idea from CAE, the developer of the CLA. In 2008, CAE approached William and asked if he would consider allowing a CAE team to come and pilot a professional development workshop that CAE was developing for faculty on developing "CLA-like" performance tasks for their own courses. He agreed, and in fall 2008, a team of two CAE employees (I was one of them), conducted a two-day workshop called "CLA in the Classroom Performance Task Academy" for nearly 40 GSU undergraduate faculty members. This was "a real turning point," claimed William. What he meant was that this was when he saw the CLA make an impact on faculty. Up until that point, it was just a test that their students were taking in a computer lab. With the workshop, they could incorporate CLA elements into their course assignments. That initial workshop resulted in two more workshops since 2013, and ultimately became the model for GSU's CLA Institute.

The CLA Institute is what administrators developed to serve the third QEP pathway "Critical Thinking." The CLA Institute pathway is an opportunity for faculty to help students develop their critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills. According to GSU's QEP website, the aim for faculty (voluntary) participation in the CLA Institute would be for faculty and staff to embed CLA-style performance tasks into courses and co-curricular activities in order to report assessment results for comparison to baseline data (retrieved online on GSU's QEP website on 3/23/15). I found an announcement on the GSU website (dated 11/2/2011) encouraging faculty members to sign up to participate in the Institute. The announcement stated that individuals could apply to either be an

Institute participant (with a stipend of $1,000 attached); a CLA task designer (with a stipend of $400); or a CLA assessor (with a stipend of $300). Participation requires a full year commitment. In the fall semester, participants attend workshops led by faculty who had received training by the CAE team, modify an upper-level course or university activity to include critical thinking SLO, and use CLA-style tasks in their course. Task designers develop CLA-style tasks that can be uploaded to a digital library (complete with scoring rubrics), but only after being approved by the Institute Director (a tenured faculty member) and the QEP Director. To date, a senior-level administrator estimated that there were about thirty of these faculty-developed performance tasks available online. Professors may "check out" these tasks for use in their classes. Assessors grade the CLA-style tasks that seniors have completed as part of their senior exit exams. Assessors also participate in scorer training to be able to score the exams consistently. How faculty decide to implement what they learned in the Institute is voluntary and up to the individual; these are faculty decisions, a senior-level administrator emphasized to me.

Embedding SLO and SLO Assessment into Reporting Structures

More than any of the other institutions involved in this study, GSU integrates assessment throughout the institution. Administrators weaved SLO and SLO assessment into the Core Curriculum and used the CLA Institute as one of the pathways for their QEP. Assessment is also embedded into reporting structures, which I will discuss here. The message that senior-level administrators want to convey to faculty is that assessment matters. These are the steps that the CAO is taking to bring about a culture of assessment: changing faculty mindset (through mandate and persuasion) and building assessment infrastructure so that one cannot ignore it. Jerome, a mid-level administrator heavily

involved in helping faculty understand SLO and SLO assessment, underscored the administration's focus on making sure everyone accepts assessment as part of his/her responsibility: "Everyone is basically responsible for assessment. All of us are responsible for student learning and for continuous improvement. So we're all supposed to have our place there."

The Academic Affairs Office requires that each academic department annually submit a Report for Continuous Improvement (RCI). The RCI is how the institution monitors and maintains that what they told SACS they would do in regards to Standard 3.3.1 actually happens. The RCI began in early 2011. Senior administrators in the Academic Affairs Office evaluate these reports, and they use a rubric. They award departments points based on improvements in areas such as retention, advisement, research and scholarly production of a department, for example.

A sub-section of the RCI is the Operational Plan and Assessment (OPA). The OPA is considered the foundation document for all planning within the department. Earlier iterations of this had been in place for the previous SACS accreditation, but there just wasn't follow through at GSU after reaccreditation was received, remarked a mid-level administrator. And earlier versions did not include SLO nor SLO assessment. This version does. Each department completes this yearly report (it is usually the assistant chair responsible for compiling all the information from faculty and submitting the report). Once completed, senior-level administrators invite the department chair (and any interested faculty) to sit with the CAO to review the report, and receive their final grade for the report. Sometimes the dean attends. The report also asks departments to identify key personnel responsible for tasks, thus assigning accountability.

Once the OPA review is completed, department chairs are expected to sit down with their faculty and review the Academic Affairs' evaluation of their submitted reports. According to a senior-level administrator involved in the review, the message that is sent to faculty from the senior administration is that "I think it's that kind of effort from our office to let people know that these things matter and we're going to look at them." This aim is supported by another senior-level administrator: "I think what we've accomplished is a way of saying these are priorities for all of us." Additionally, senior-level administrators award money to departments for good OPA scores. While a senior-level administrator said that it is not much—ranging from $1,000 to under $3,000—in a tight budget, it can be helpful.

Creating New Administrative Positions to Support Assessment

Senior level administrators are sensitive that when it comes to SLO and SLO assessment, faculty need help. Karen said that faculty need a "third party who can do a lot of the work for them, because they don't have time." So the CAO created assessment navigator positions—the College Assessment Coordinator—for each one of the schools and colleges, a role specifically designed to assist departments in completing their OPAs. This individual coordinates assessment with all the academic departments for the entire college or school, and is responsible for making sure that she hosts workshops for faculty, offers coaching for faculty, provides resources related to assessment, and finds ways to assist faculty in using assessment data for continuous improvement.

The CAO also created the assistant department chair position in 2010 to help the department chair with the extra reporting requirements. According to William, the assistant department chair has "primary responsibility for assessment within the

department, especially assessment of student learning." The assistant department chair receives financial compensation for these extra duties.

The Faculty

Administrators encourage and mandate faculty to incorporate SLO and SLO assessment into their courses, for chairs to incorporate SLO and SLO assessment into their departments and programs, for deans to incorporate SLO and SLO assessment into the schools and colleges, and for all these SLO and SLO assessments to tie into the institutional SLO and SLO assessment. There is quite an extensive structure in place to propel and support all these activities. But what has been faculty response to this hum of assessment activity at GSU?

Having described the top-down implementation of assessment at the institution and the structures that administrators have created to support assessment and make it an integral part of the institution, this section focuses on faculty response to the CLA and SLO assessment at GSU.

In November 2013, I interviewed six full-time faculty members, two of whom were prominent faculty representatives in the Faculty Assembly (FA). Four had participated in the CLA in the Classroom Academy or the CLA Institute; three were a part of the Core Curriculum Committee. The six faculty members represented faculty-led committees in Program Review, Academic Affairs, Tenure and Promotions, and Hearing and Reconsideration. Four of the administrators I interviewed used to be GSU faculty.

In establishing structures for assessment, administrators did not ignore the faculty in the process. In fact, senior-level administrators such as William made it a point to make sure that faculty were updated via FA, given opportunity to provide feedback on

drafts of the RCI and OPA reports, and participated in revising the Core. Administrators also provided professional development opportunities for faculty to become familiar with assessment. William reflected that "I think that in the late '80s, early '90s, a lot of us on campus sort of saw assessment as a necessary evil to meet the external assessment [e.g., SACS], the external accrediting agency's requirements," and so the "…the CLA, the first couple years, was probably nothing more than just another thing that we did that was really sort of externally-driven and nobody really cared that much about it." But it was the CLA in the Classroom Academy, which he eventually turned into the CLA Institute on campus, that he considered a turning point for getting faculty support and tapping into their enthusiasm as teachers. A senior-level administrator, while not being able to provide the exact numbers, estimated that about 100 faculty members have been exposed to some kind of CLA training—whether is was through the CLA in the Classroom workshop hosted by CAE or through the campus-based CLA Institute. According to this senior-level administrator,

> I think the CLA is really becoming part of our culture…. the SACS self-study helped us—and I think this is where we got a lot of faculty buy-in—helped us understand the importance of assessment of student learning outcomes generally. And of course the CLA is one part of that. I think over the last three to four years, our faculty has grown much more, has become much more engaged in the assessment of student learning outcomes. We've worked very hard on that. I hope I'm not just thinking wishfully here and seeing what I want to see. But I think that there's a strong—I'm not going to say majority—but there is certainly a critical mass of faculty throughout the campus that have embraced the student learning outcomes assessment, and the CLA as part of that.

The claim that faculty are familiar with the CLA is supported by faculty representative Matthew, "I think all of us are *much* more cognizant of student learning outcomes and, even more so, program learning outcomes." But what remains to be explored is whether faculty overall accept that SLO and SLO assessment is part of their professorial role.

We are Teachers

Because administrators and faculty describe GSU as a teaching institution first, teaching and work with students are uppermost amongst faculty priorities. What interviewees expressed was a common commitment to serving their students, who they described primarily as minority, economically disadvantaged, first-generation, ill-prepared academically to do college-level work. A senior-level administrator explained that when she hires new faculty to GSU, "…we *really* make it clear who they're coming to teach…. and I talk about the populations here, and what it means to integrate your teaching style with the learning styles and skill development of our students." Several faculty commented that new faculty who join the institution and do not understand the students will not succeed at the institution.

> Vivian (an assistant professor): So I would say the bulk of our job is teaching undergraduates effectively. It's especially important that we teach effectively because we're working with students who don't have a strong academic background and intrinsic motivation and they need support from instructors here maybe more than other students at other institutions would. I would say our job is 75% teaching and 25% service and research.

In fact, when I interviewed Kim, a professor, she mentioned that a new colleague in the department was about to leave the institution because of his disappointment that teaching was not what he expected, that the *students* were not what he expected.

Like faculty across all my study sites, the faculty I interviewed at GSU cited that one of the biggest changes in their role was the increased absorption of non-academic areas such as recruitment, fundraising, and administrative work. In a top-down institution like GSU, which in turn needs to report to System Administration and the state legislature, there is a sense from faculty that they really have no choice in taking on the additional duties they have been told they must do. For example, stated Matthew, knowing you

work in a public institution where the state legislature has oversight and control of the budget alters your expectations of the extent of your control over your job. Matthew said that he felt that the job does change "…based on whatever new mandate comes out of [state capitol], our expectations change. What we are expected to produce changes because some new catchphrase comes out and we're supposed to implement that catchphrase into everything that we do, so that expectation changes. With budget cuts, even the expectations changed there because we were suddenly required to do more and more with less and less."

Increased administrative work came up repeatedly by faculty. In addition to distributing traditional grades, faculty are also required to submit more data such as attendance records and assessment results, for example. Susan, a mid-level administrator acknowledged the expansion of the professorial role into these other domains: "I think professors are being asked to take on more and more administrative tasks in the sense of things that relate to assessment, things that relate to setting departmental goals, and monitoring achievement of those goals. Faculty are involved in *a lot* more of those things than they were when I first started out in the profession 20 years ago." While not all faculty necessarily have to address institution-wide learning outcomes and assessment like the CLA, they do have to create course-level SLO and SLO assessment, and those feed into the Report for Continuous Improvement and the Operational Plan and Assessment. That is now part of the job.

The Absence of a Collegial Framework

Earlier, I described a FA that was characterized as a relatively "parochial" and compliant one by administrators. Harold, a faculty member nearing retirement, described this compliance as a trait not just within the FA, but within faculty across the campus:

> What I find *striking* about this campus, and this was even before assessment became so predominant, is there's been instances—and this is my [nearing 30th year at this campus]—there's only been one example of faculty rebellion or dissent. I am a child of [a very liberal institution] in the '60s. That will tell you A LOT…. So the idea of student and faculty dissenting is something that is built into the culture at [the liberal institution I attended] and is unheard of here.

The one act of rebellion that he recalled was that over 100 faculty members signed a letter asking that the president leave, and this was over 25 years ago. Harold surmised that part of this is the culture of the institution—"don't rock the boat"—and part of it is the "economic tenuousness" (i.e., don't want to lose their jobs): "So all of us feel very fortunate to have a job and we know we can't change. There is no alternative. We are here. We can't go elsewhere because there is no elsewhere." Harold's words evoke an image of trapped faculty.

A faculty representative on the FA had a harsher view of his colleagues:

> Richard: I think that some might not be as collegial as they should be, and I'm not really sure how that is something that could be changed. Because I know we've identified and I tried to start a policy, develop a policy on, collegiality and use collegiality as a fourth criterion for reappointment, tenure, and promotion. Well, the faculty didn't really like that idea. And the reason I know that a lot of faculty thought it, and didn't like it, is because of this collegial/un-collegial mindset. If I would say anything…and it's not everyone, it's really not…it's just the lack of faculty support. Not the administrators not supporting faculty, not necessarily faculty not supporting administrators, but more on the lack of faculty supporting other faculty members.

When Richard speaks of collegiality, it is more than a lack of friendliness to one's colleagues. He speaks of the absence of an institution-service orientation in some faculty. He explained,

> I think that my role does not just mean that I'm supposed to teach. If there is something that needs to be done, I feel like faculty should buy in to it. For instance, if this is my University, then I should have stakes in it, I should have an interest in it. And if there's something that needs to be done, I should be *willing* to do it and not necessarily be looking for compensation for everything…. I think that when you start saying, "Ok, this is what the administrator should be doing. This is what the faculty should do. Or the faculty shouldn't have anything to do with recruitment. Or the faculty shouldn't have anything with fundraising. Or the faculty shouldn't have anything to do with policies," I disagree with that. I think that every duty, or every responsibility, at the University belongs to everyone if the University is expected to be successful.

Sally, a professor, also indicated that what some see as a calling—being called to teach—others see as just a job: "…most people are very much on their teaching. Some of the professors, like any place, some of the professors wouldn't see their jobs so much as a calling as so much as a livelihood." Because of this perceived lack of collegiality, Richard felt that it translated in a lack of a collegial framework in the governing of the institution: a lack of interest in bringing up or pushing for larger issues beyond the nuts and bolts of their job (e.g., salary, vacation time, etc.).

While my small, private institutions with their relatively intimate number of faculty often described the faculty community as collegial, like a family, with a lot of cross-disciplinary interaction, the faculty here described themselves as generally being close to members within their department but not as familiar with those outside it. As a mid-level administrator who manages many faculty described it to me: "…we are large enough to be siloed…. They [faculty] don't know people across the university." The impression I gained from my faculty interviews was that there was no common set of

values—beyond identifying oneself as a teacher—that drew the faculty together. The faculty felt fragmented. And I wondered to what extent that contributed to the impression the FA gave to administrators that they were "parochial." They didn't seem to be working toward a common vision for the institution. And I considered if that, plus the acknowledgement faculty shared with me that they work in a bureaucratic, top-down institution, as well as feeling insecure about job security (due to the fragile financial circumstances of the past few years and the institution's emphasis on things like the student credit hours to full-time equivalent ratio), contributed to faculty not exerting a collegial framework on governance but allowing the dominance of administrative authority.

Faculty Concerns about SLO Assessment and the CLA

Overall faculty response to the CLA at GSU has been mixed. There have been no instances that I could find of formal resistance mounted by faculty to the CLA or to SLO assessment. In fact, the FA voted in fall 2013 to support the institution moving forward with the implementation of the next iteration of the CLA—the CLA+—on campus. But this is a FA that seems to be relatively disinclined to challenge administrative authority, and that also has a high degree of trust and confidence in the CAO. A faculty member who participated in the CLA Institute shared his thoughts on general faculty response to the CLA and the Institute as one of general interest: "When we have the general faculty meeting and everybody seems to me, they appreciate and they value the CLA-style assessment as a measurement." But one faculty member, who has strong feelings against the CLA and what it stands for explained that because faculty see that one of the drivers of SLO and SLO assessment is the accreditor, "We all know that it's a done deal, that

complaining about it would be futile" and what faculty are left with is a little bit of choice in what instruments to use to assess.

What follows are faculty's four main arguments against, and concerns about, the CLA and SLO assessment that emerged from my interviews.

(1) Assessment is to assess the assessor

Ari is a mid-level administrator whose job is to interact with faculty on the CLA Institute and to recruit them to participate. In many ways, he stands at the front line of receiving faculty response to SLO assessment. He explained to me that a faculty concern that he hears often when speaking to faculty is that assessment is a back-of-the-envelope way of assessing the professor.

> I can say this because I've had this discussion with faculty members before—not just here but at [my] other institution—we're not evaluating *you*. And I think faculty members take it personally. Like when you come in and try to do assessment, or OPAs, or anything like that, that you're making a personal attack on their quality of teaching or their quality of instruction. But what you're trying to say is that we're just trying to improve the institution. So we need to know certain things about you or your course or your department so that we can better the institution, and this can help you all because you can this information, you can use it to make improvement in whatever way that you wish. But sometimes, I think, faculty members and departments see it as "Well, if we show them that we're not doing something good, then maybe they'll come back on us and we'll get in trouble" or if a faculty member does this "Oh, maybe, I'll get fired." Something like "there's going to be some negative repercussion" instead of…almost seen as a test or something like "We have to pass, we have to do this, or else something's going to happen." When really, that's not the purpose of assessment. Assessment is just for continuous improvement: we're actually doing it so you can find out what all you are not doing right so you can make improvement. Sometimes it's not perceived that way.

And in a top-down, accountability-driven, data-gathering institution like GSU, one can see why some faculty might perceive that assessment is another tool to evaluate them. Along a similar vein, Matthew (faculty representative) recalled various concerns put forth

by faculty that assessment was really a reflection of their skills as a professor. He said he would hear arguments like,

> "It makes me feel like my tests aren't good enough. It makes me feel like I'm not assessing my students sufficiently." And again, when it's been said to me, I've had to reply that this is not a reflection on you. This is a reflection on their overall college academic experience, not specifically in your class, but assessing them from the time they come in as freshmen to the time they go out and graduation: what have they learned. Have they learned critical thinking? Have they learned clear and coherent communication?

What faculty interpret from this assessment emphasis is that they are not trusted to execute their work. Ari shared the faculty perspective by quoting some of their concerns:

> "Well, you don't feel that I'm doing what I'm doing right. That you need to come check me and assess and evaluate what I'm doing so now I have to report on this, or now I have to report on that. Why can't you all just let us run our department the way we've been running it. We all have PhDs, we all know what we're doing over here, we don't need any Big Brother coming over and looking over our shoulder and letting us know we're doing something wrong or right. Just let us do our thing."

A mid-level administrator (who used to be a faculty member at GSU) empathized why faculty might sense that assessment is a message of distrust of the faculty:

> That suddenly they have to do more to document student learning, it's not necessarily that their word is taken or their credentials are taken into consideration, that their expertise is taken into consideration—'Well, I gave these grades. I said the students were learning'—and that is not enough to stand on at this point. We have to have documentation of student learning and we have to have all the program learning outcomes for instance and they have to be aligned with the mission. There are all these things that some faculty may not have been accustomed to. So their roles are basically changing to facilitators of learning who are also documenting student learning.

This administrator touches on faculty anxiety that their professional roles are changing.

But perhaps faculty concerns are not entirely unjustified. From my interviews with administrators, GSU *is* moving toward incorporating this kind of assessment data into professional evaluations. Data from the RCI is now part of the Chair Evaluation

Form, the Dean Evaluation Form, and even the CAO self-evaluation. Explained a senior-level administrator, "I think once you start building [assessment] into people's evaluations, I think they really begin to take it seriously." A mid-level administrator also mentioned that how to incorporate effectiveness of teaching and learning, or how well one achieves his/her SLO, is entering into administrator-level conversations about professorial evaluations: "Well, that's what's going to happen. That's one of the things where I need to work more closely with Chairs and…Deans about that…that's the only way that anything happens with faculty…. if it's incorporated to reappointment, tenure, and promotion in some way."

(2) Assessment is to assuage external groups

While asserting that assessment helps everyone in the institution improve student learning, administrators acknowledged that assessment is of course required for external accountability—accountability to System Administration who in turn is accountable to the state legislature for funding, and accountability to outside accreditors who require institutions and programs to develop SLO and implement SLO assessment. Because these initiatives did not originate from faculty, faculty are not apt to get on board enthusiastically, said a mid-level administrator who works directly with faculty on SLO assessment: "If it's something that comes from the ground up, it's something that faculty initiates, then oftentimes it gets a lot more buy-in, understandably so. In this case, it was something that very much was imposed."

> When faculty see assessment as another top-down mandate, it is hard to get excited.
>
> Ari: But putting that within the QEP and then making it a part of accreditation, I guess it's the way it's packaged. Then you see pushback where faculty don't want to participate, who don't want to be a part of it, who don't show the same amount of interest in it…But then, again, when it's considered to be an assessment

> initiative, or accreditation, or something that's external that's brought on…cause, you know, it's not like we the faculty came up with this and we decided to do it ourselves. But it's something that the outside, external forces, are making us do. We don't have any control over it and you're just making us do something. Then you kind of get negative feedback and not so much buy-in and enthusiasm. The levels of enthusiasm are way lower than what I thought they could be.

According to Ari, the lack of faculty enthusiasm for participating in the CLA Institute might indicate they don't see the aim of assessment to improve teaching and learning.

(3) Assessment doesn't benefit my work as a professor

Because faculty are aware of the need to respond to mandates, they articulate a concern that all this effort is just jumping through hoops with no discernible benefit to them as professors. And also, they find CLA results a bit too esoteric in that they can't connect its results to what they do in their courses. Vivian, a faculty member who was involved in the Core Curriculum revision:

> I think that the resistance…one reason for resistance from faculty is that it's esoteric—"What are we measuring here? What does this have to do with my discipline? Why would I want to teach somebody to critically think and write an argument when I'm teaching math students or I'm teaching biology students or what have you? It doesn't apply here. It's extra work."

Administrators fully acknowledge that connecting assessment results back to the classroom, to improve teaching practices, is a challenge, and one that they are working on.

(4) Assessment is not part of my job

Two camps emerged on whether assessment is part of the professorial role or not part of the role. Some faculty and administrators reflected that the difference was one of older, more established faculty versus younger faculty. It is the opinion of a senior-level administrator that "Younger faculty are *much* more willing to do this [integrate assessment into the job]." She is not the only one to articulate this difference by career stage. Vivian, a faculty member, pointed out that older faculty tend to argue against SLO

assessment by applying an academic freedom argument and she thought that this argument "comes from a different era," while she surmised that "The newer faculty members that come in, the people that we've hired in the last few years, nobody questions that assessment is part of what we have to do, or that we have outside stakeholders. It just seems that the job description has been revised. " Thus, those who believe that assessment is not part of the job will tend to resist any notion of incorporating assessment, CLA-like tasks, changing pedagogy, etc.

Because of this, the CAO and the president are agreed that they want to introduce SLO assessment from the beginning to new faculty, to let them know that this is an institution that values assessment and expects them to value and incorporate assessment into what they do. Karen determined to do this through professional development opportunities because she said, it "behooves an institution, and its senior leadership, to support initiatives and provide the resources that lead them to that." Thus, the CAO holds a semester-long seminar every fall for new faculty members, and one of the topics covered is the CLA and the CLA Institute.

Matthew, a faculty representative, said, "…at every departmental meeting we talk about assessment in our units or as a department we talk about assessment." And his response to faculty who say, "You can't make me do it?"

> My response is, if you want a job, it's part of your job. I was guilty of saying a couple of years ago, 'This is not what I was hired to do.' Because part of my job description changed drastically. And when I said, 'This is not what I was hired to do,' I got the response that you are hired to do whatever the president has you do. Because you serve at the discretion of the president. I think that's true of any faculty member. So I have a choice. I can either say this is not my job and I can go somewhere else, or I can embrace the change and make it part of my job and keep my job. The days now where budget cuts are making it very difficult? I'm going to keep my job."

Here, Matthew echoes Harold's image of a trapped faculty.

Richard, the faculty representative who spoke of bringing back the value of "collegiality" to the faculty and expressed an institution-service orientation, agreed that assessment is part of a professor's job.

> I don't think it's impacting faculty autonomy. I think that when faculty say something like that, to me I think it's a red flag because I should not mind. If I'm doing what I should be doing, what I know is the right thing, then I don't see how that's impacting on their autonomy. It's just a matter of accountability because I would want to know that my students are being successful because why graduate someone and their degree and what they learned is not going to actually help?

Richard, who has been at the institution for a decade, takes the stance that assessment is part of the job.

When I explored with administrators (especially those who directly managed faculty) and faculty whether they felt that assessment worked toward de-professionalizing faculty, a mid-level administrator responded, "I do have some colleagues in other departments who resist the very idea of learning outcomes; they think it is a way of commodifying and quantifying a process that should be qualitative and individual and that doing that sort of de-natures the educational enterprise. I think that's a quaint idea." Here is an exchange I had with Harold, a tenured faculty member nearing retirement:

> Harold: What assessment does is it degrades faculty.
>
> Me: Can you elaborate on that?
>
> Harold: Because decisions are data-driven and administration and top-down rather than coming from the faculty. It impoverishes the curriculum. It corrupts the pedagogy.
>
> Me: How does it impoverish the curriculum?
>
> Harold: It impoverishes the curriculum because we have to do things that show up in the assessment instrument rather than things…I'd love to say look at this Shakespeare, look at how wonderful it is. Not worry about how we're going to assess the response to it. But I have to assess the response to it. So it impoverishes the curriculum and it corrupts the pedagogy because we have to do things that

> match up to the instrument. And the example of the [BLANK] course that I just mentioned is the most striking example to me.

Harold echoes several themes: concern that administration via assessment is inserting itself into the curriculum, and feeling constrained as a professional by assessment.

Linda, a senior-level administrator, recalled that when she made presentations to faculty in the past to bring them up to speed on filling out the Annual Program Review (another reporting system started in summer 2013) which has the Program Learning Outcomes Matrix, faculty would start quoting her things from AAUP, arguing that "AAUP says that these kinds of measures do not ensure that a student is going to do better on the job, or these kinds of measures should not be used with promotion and tenure because these are often factors outside of the faculty member's control because they don't get to select who can come into their classes, it's a self-selection process by the students." And Linda responded that the administration was open to hearing from faculty *how* they wanted to document academic quality, that the administrators were not going to require specific measures like the major field test or the CLA, but that faculty could decide within their department what they wanted to do; they could even develop their own department test. The "how" was completely their hands.

Faculty Support for SLO Assessment and the CLA

Faculty articulated their reasons for supporting SLO assessment and the CLA using the following two arguments:

(1) Assessment is part of my job

From the point of administrators I interviewed, they were all in agreement that assessment is part of the professorial role. And they used the argument that it should be because the aim of assessment is ultimately to improve teaching and learning. Therefore,

conducting SLO assessment and using assessment result to improve one's teaching is inherent to being a teacher and a researcher. Karen voiced this vision for assessment: "That virtually every faculty member would understand that it's basically part of the fundamental process of effective teaching and learning. And it is your primary source of feedback for improvement." Linda, a former educator herself, believed that one of the reasons to bring faculty to faculty development training like the CLA Institute is "to introduce people to a way of, not just assessing, but teaching that would encourage critical thinking to be going on throughout the class." She wanted faculty to see that assessment was central to teaching.

A mid-level administrator reflected that the current emphasis on assessment definitely changes the job for professors,

> I think the whole idea of assessment is a challenge for faculty and administrators. It's a challenge for faculty, especially those of us who were trained in the pre-assessment days, to think in terms of learning outcomes and in terms of assessments of learning outcomes. Most importantly, in terms of shared or agreed-upon assessments and learning outcomes. I like to say that the faculty are still, by and large, in the craft mode of production. That is to say, they design their courses individually, they teach them individually, and they have, in my experience, only the barest of agreements among themselves about what they're going to teach and none at all about *how* they're going to teach. Getting faculty or instructors in general to think about shared assessment is a HUGE change in the mentality and the sociability of faculty because we just—at least I was just not trained in that, at all. It does require a big shift. And as an administrator, nudging faculty along that path has been one of the, and remains, biggest challenges because it is a learning process. It's a long-term process and it does not happen overnight. That's a big part of any administrator, faculty leader-type position, is to help faculty along that process. I don't think there's any going back. It's just not in the cards.

He continued, "Most of the people who have been working on the Core revision process and the assessment of the Core Curriculum have, at least, come to see that this is part of your professional identity now, an increasing part of your professional identity is bound

up with being able to show that your students are learning something. I'm not sure whether faculty like it or not, but I think that they are either accepting or resigned to that becoming a bigger part of what they do."

For the most part, the faculty that I interviewed didn't disagree. But that is certainly due to the fact that most of my faculty interviewees had participated in either the CLA in the Classroom Workshop and/or the CLA Institute. Vivian, a faculty member of the CCC, posited that assessments like the CLA are important because

> We ought to be doing it anyway. If we are teaching worth our salt at all, we MUST be assessing. So all we're doing is making it on a larger level than what we would be doing anyway. Obviously we test, so we're trying to determine somehow…we're trying to determine somehow what students are learning. So why can't we do that in a way that shows our stakeholders we're doing good work here, this is making a difference. I don't have a problem with that.

Having discussions about what to assess (establishing SLO) and how to assess (the assessment) are positive discussions because, according to Vivian, there is coordination and that can only be beneficial to the students. When she first joined her department, she recalled that the expectations from her chair (who was an early supporter of the CLA and SLO) set the tone for how she understood her job.

> Vivian: Our department meetings every month were about…they were based on data: what are our students doing, what are they not doing, based on our assessments…what's working, what's not working, and if this is working let's try it, if we think it might work let's try it, let's do some assessment and let's decide whether it's working and then we'll decide to keep it or not. So my whole career in higher ed. began with those discussions that this is our job: our job is to ensure that our students are getting what they need to get. So moving into the professor's role, I took that with me.

She believes that assessment is part of her job.

Faculty from the professional programs were more likely to see it as part of their job versus those in more traditional majors, pointed out Karen. She was the only one who

mentioned this and it could be that she sees this trend more clearly as a senior-level administrator (she works with all departments). Elucidated Karen, "Now, the departments that are flying with outcomes, again, tend to be the ones that have discipline-based accreditation: Social Work, Nursing, all of them…. they've taken off with it. They've done a great job." Two administrators that I spoke with who used to be professors in the School of Education are two of the institution's strongest advocates of SLO assessment and the CLA. A senior-level administrator also mentioned that because one of the goals of this institution is to get as many of their programs accredited as possible, "If there is accreditation in the program, we're getting it," and the reason this administrator mentioned it because it has much such a difference in regards to faculty buy-in because all of these accreditors are asking what are your SLO and how are you assessing them? So faculty are encountering SLO and SLO assessment from many different places."

(2) Assessment improves student learning

When faculty can connect assessment results to changes to teaching and this in turns improves student learning, then they fully support assessment. A faculty representative, who has been through the CLA Institute, said that when faculty could see the benefits of the CLA, especially through the CLA Institute, their wariness of assessment started to change.

> Matthew: It's extra work. And they didn't want to do extra work. Faculty have enough to do. To them, a lot of them, this was just one more thing that we're being asked to do and we're not being compensated for it. But, those faculty members that saw growth in student writing in particular—communication—began to see the value in it. And now, *a lot* of the professors have simply incorporated this as one of the exercises, one of the assignments in their course. It doesn't have any impact on the grade students get in their course, but it does measure from the beginning of the semester to the end of the semester, what have they learned in terms of communication.

Mathew was a faculty member who went to one of the first CLA in the Classroom workshops offered, and then became a scorer of the tasks created through the CLA Institute.

Senior and mid-level administrators at GSU showed consistency in their message that the aim of assessment is for teaching and learning—for continuous improvement. A mid-level administrated explained, "What you're doing is you're using the results to try to continuously improve. You've got some evidence that something didn't work and you're trying to…we all do it. This is just doing it in a more systematic way. Any good teacher constantly assesses what they do."

(3) Assessment helps tell our story

This is not an argument that faculty put forth to support assessment, but I include it in this section because it is an argument that Jerome, a thoughtful mid-level administrator who was a former faculty member at GSU before assuming his administrator position, mentioned. What Jerome said was that "it's a way to tell our story." He meant that assessment provides a powerful narrative to outsiders—especially if the results are positive—of the value of non-selective institutions like GSU. This is what other administrators articulated too.

> William: …we have to work doubly hard to be able to demonstrate that we do, in fact, add value to this region, that we are in fact a worthwhile investment of the taxpayers. And I think that's where data like what we can generate with the CLA becomes really valuable in that kind of context because we can generate data that demonstrates that we are adding value.
>
> Susan: For example, one of the issues within the [system-level committee examining General Education] right now is this issue of whether to assess value-added. Your position on that depends on whether you're an elite or more open institution. That was one of the reasons why we adopted it at GSU, because we knew that we could never match the scores of students coming out of Northern and State (two of the institutions in the system with the highest reputation and

> national name recognition value). But what we could do is add value. And that was *very* attractive for us in terms of telling a story about how we change lives. There seems to be a lot of resistance to that [among the more elite institutions].

This narrative is what faculty and administrators from Stamper College also mentioned.

A "Well Developed Culture of Assessment"

In its online "College Portrait" (as part of the Voluntary System of Accountability),[16] under the section for "Student Learning Outcomes," the first sentence reads, "GSU has a well-developed culture of assessment." What this means for GSU is that it has integrated assessment mainly through reporting structures from the course level, to the program level, to the department level, to the school level, and to the institution level. It has been able to do so abetted by an external accreditor that mandates it, a bureaucratic governance structure that currently values assessment and accountability and expects GSU faculty to comply, and a relatively compliant faculty and Faculty Assembly that accepts administrative authority. But the CAO has also been intentional in using persuasion to get faculty to support assessment initiatives by encouraging them to participate in the CLA Institute, and by introducing new faculty to the CLA and the importance of assessment in professional development workshops. GSU has reached a point, declared a senior-level administrator, where they can say, "This is part of our culture," and "Where in everything we do, we try to assess how it is and we use that to get better."

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[16] College Portrait is an online database of institutions participating as part of the Voluntary System of Accountability, sponsored by the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities and American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Per the website (March 6, 2015): "the College Portrait supplies basic comparable information through a common web report. Information includes student and campus characteristics, cost of attendance, success and progress rates, campus safety, class size, student experiences on campus, and student learning outcomes."

Conclusion to Chapter IV

In Chapter IV, I presented two institutions—Stamper College and Grant State University (GSU)—where senior-level administrators exerted administrative authority to introduce and implement the CLA in their respective institutions. At Stamper College, this demonstration of administrative authority resulted in a fierce faculty rejection of the CLA. Because of past administrative overreach, the faculty had revised the governance structure to increase faculty power. Thus, their perception that the CAO was trying to force the CLA on them with possible punitive consequences did not go over well. When the CAO moved assessment into faculty jurisdiction (to the committees), resistance dissipated and faculty worked to incorporate SLO assessment and the CLA into the curriculum.

The response to the CLA from faculty at GSU, however, has been more mixed. As a bureaucratic organization, administrative authority runs from the state legislature to the Board of Governors to System Administration to GSU's administrators to GSU faculty. Faculty understand that while they have a voice through their representative Faculty Assembly (FA), if they are required to do something, then it must be done. Faculty have a high level of trust in the senior-level administrator who introduced and proposed the CLA to FA. Therefore, the FA voted for the CLA without incident but getting faculty support to be more participatory in SLO assessment has been another matter. While there is a core group of faculty who are supportive and active in incorporating SLO assessment into the curriculum, trying to tie CLA results to teaching and learning, there also seems to be a group that is more passive resistant/passive accepting, who have absented themselves from on-campus assessment activity. This may

be because there is a struggle within faculty with whether they consider assessment to be part of the professorial role. Administrators in both institutions said that they do see assessment as an integral part of the professorial role.

Also, at both institutions, these influential and proactive senior-level administrators articulated and enacted a vision of creating a "culture of assessment" at their institutions. For Stamper College, this vision took the form of a persuasive approach of assessment messaging and cultivating faculty to be experts and leaders in SLO assessment. Grant State University, too, took a persuasive approach similar to Stamper College. But this institution, more than any of the institutions in the study, took a detailed structural approach to creating a culture of assessment: developing reporting and accountability mechanism, creating staff positions, and establishing a professional development program called the CLA Institute. In explicating this "culture of assessment" further, what I found is that the mindsets being cultivated and the structures being put in place are the foundations of establishing jurisdictional boundaries of assessment: determining and allocating responsibilities of SLO assessment and the CLA to various individuals and groups within the institution. Interestingly, it is the administrators taking the lead.

CHAPTER V

CONSENSUS-BUILDING FROM THE BOTTOM-UP

Overview to Chapter V

In this chapter, I present my findings from Redeemer College, a small, private, Christian institution in the Midwest, and the University of Carlow, a small, private urban institution in the Northeast. As at Stamper College and Grant State University, administrators at Redeemer College and University of Carlow introduced the CLA to faculty, influenced by the need to include student learning outcomes assessments for reaccreditation visits and in search of an assessment to measure general education learning outcomes. However, at Redeemer College, administrators only suggested the CLA as a possibility, allowing faculty to consider whether it should be implemented, and at the University of Carlow, too, administrators maintained a relatively "light" touch with the CLA, focusing on securing faculty buy-in.

At first glance, Redeemer College and the University of Carlow couldn't be more different. One is a liberal arts institution built on and sustained by a Christian worldview, which faculty, administrators, and students are expected to incorporate and advance in their lives. The other is a non-sectarian institution that, while influenced by a religious organization, does not prescribe to a specific religion, and while it values the liberal arts, describes itself online as a career-oriented institution. Interviewees from one institution constantly mention "cohesiveness," while interviewees at the other frequently brought up "diversity."

What they have in common is that senior-level administrators at both institutions chose to lay the groundwork for assessment carefully, ensuring with the CLA that they

would proceed with faculty support. Administrators at Redeemer did so because of their culture and governance favored professional authority over administrative authority. Administrators at the University of Carlow balanced their administrative authority with professional authority because of their own experiences as former faculty members, their collegial relationships with undergraduate faculty, and past administrator/faculty history.

Governance at Redeemer College is shaped and driven by a religious worldview that results in a flat organization with a powerful, unified Faculty Assembly. Faculty at Redeemer College described their institution as a collegial organization. For Redeemer faculty, discussion and debate are considered a faculty member's professional duty, part of their professorial identity. When senior-level administrators told faculty that the institution must develop SLO and SLO assessment to meet external accreditation, faculty verbally resisted. But the administrators utilized Redeemer's "discovery process" of discussion, debate, and an airing of concerns to dampen this faculty resistance and to ensure that the development of SLO and the choice of SLO assessment were faculty-driven. They merely offered the CLA as a suggestion for SLO assessment, leaving it up to faculty to decide whether they wanted it or not. Once faculty collectively took part in this discovery process, they accepted SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA.

The University of Carlow is the "youngest" institution in my study not only in terms of its history of using the CLA, but also in its reaccreditation timeline. When I visited the campus in fall 2013, the campus was beginning to prepare for an accreditation visit for the following year. Thus, it provides an opportunity to see an institution in the midst of a relatively early stage of incorporating SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA. According to interviewees, Carlow has a top-down, bureaucratic model of organization

and yet it also operates according to an informal, collegial model. In this case study we see faculty understanding that they must address SLO and SLO assessment in order to meet the requirements of external accreditors (and senior-level administrators' interest in SLO and SLO assessment), but administrators are not issuing mandates. Instead, they are utilizing informal networks, and collegial relationships with a very small group of faculty to gradually win over larger faculty support. As assessment discussions begin to take root and shape at Carlow, we witness through the interviews faculty struggling to identify the aims of SLO assessment and its impact (or potential impact) on their professional role and its overall place at Carlow.

Redeemer College: Faculty Involvement in Governance

Introduction

Redeemer College is a small, four-year, Christian liberal arts college located in a Midwestern suburb.[17] It received its most recent reaccreditation in 2010 from the regional accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Redeemer College is a case study of an institution where governance is shaped and driven by a religious worldview that consequently results in a flat organization with a powerful, unified Faculty Assembly. Based on interviewees' descriptions of the Faculty Assembly at Redeemer, it is the most involved, vocal, and participatory group of the five institutions in my study.

This Christian worldview fundamentally guides how faculty see their role in the institution: it is their duty to participate in governance—to discuss, debate, and question proposals. When senior-level administrators told faculty that the institution must develop student learning outcomes (SLO) and SLO assessment to meet external accreditation, faculty verbally resisted. But what the administration did do is they utilized Redeemer's "discovery process" of discussion, debate, and airing of concerns to dampen this faculty resistance and to ensure that the development of SLO and the choice of SLO assessment were faculty-driven. Once faculty moved toward acceptance, they rolled up their sleeves and worked to incorporate assessment into the institution. The Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) was offered to faculty as an option for SLO assessment, and it was up to the faculty, once again through the discovery process, to determine whether they wanted it or not. They decided for it.

[17] To maintain the confidentiality of Redeemer College, it was necessary to label its particular religious orientation as "Christian" rather than name its specific religious affiliation.

I first present the Christian worldview and how it shapes governance at Redeemer College. Then I move into how this worldview contributes to faculty understanding of their role in the institution: what it is to be a professor at Redeemer, the community of faculty at Redeemer, and faculty responsibility and expectations in governing through the Faculty Assembly. In understanding the faculty role in the institution, I explain the process by which SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA was introduced to Redeemer faculty and the critical role that a small group of faculty colleagues played in obtaining faculty support and crafting the message for assessment initiatives.

Background

A Christian Worldview

The mission of Redeemer College is to provide a Biblically informed liberal arts education in the Christian tradition. The Christian worldview—or basic belief system—emerged from the Protestant Reformation, particularly Calvinism. As stated on the institution's website (adapted and retrieved on 1/20/15), the basic tenets are that creation is God's work, the world is full of sin, and that redemption can only happen through Christ. Stemming from this worldview, the website continues, is the conviction that those who teach and learn are "coworkers with Christ," and that education must involve the "whole person" as a "thinking, feeling, and believing creature."

Of the 14 administrators and faculty that I interviewed at Redeemer College, *all* spoke of the mission of the institution, adherence to the mission, a commitment to this worldview, and how this worldview shapes their participation as a member of the Redeemer community. The website states, "From the beginning and continuing today, students learn from dedicated professors who integrate a Christian worldview into their

pedagogy and the curriculum." And so it is that every faculty member that I interviewed spoke about teaching from a Christian perspective and articulated the importance of living out their faith in their professional role.

Founded by a group of Christian business leaders, Redeemer began as a two-year college, and began offering its first baccalaureate degrees in the early 1970s. I visited the campus in October 2013. The campus is relatively compact; about half a dozen buildings situated in close proximity to one another make up the classrooms, offices, dormitories, and major facilities. It is a beautifully maintained institution—verdant, well-tended lawns, relatively new buildings. A sense of peace and calm blankets the campus.

In fall 2013, the total undergraduate enrollment was nearly 1,400 (NCES, fall 2013). The admissions rate is high at 90 percent and of those admitted, 39 percent enrolled for fall 2013 (NCES, fall 2013). 34 percent of undergraduates receive Pell grants. The three largest programs, according to bachelor's awards conferred (2012-2013) are in Health Professions and Related Programs (specifically Registered Nursing), Education (specifically Elementary Education and Teaching) and Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services (specifically Business/Commerce).[18]

The students are guided in their studies by over 80 full-time faculty and over 60 part-time faculty (NCES, fall 2013). Because most of those who work and enroll in this institution are unified by a shared Christian worldview, the community is very tight. Donna, a professor, explained their community in this way:

> …newcomers—students, staff, and faculty—when you ask them to describe what is particular to Redeemer, quite often the first word that comes to their lips is "community." We don't always know what community means or how best to

[18] These categories of programs/majors are from the NCES College Navigator.

> foster it, but there's something about the spirit of this place that people experience as a welcoming and supportive, nurturing, accepting community experience.

David, a senior-level administrator, described Redeemer as a "small college culture" where "Everybody knows everybody's business [laughs]. In a sense we have to work through that together." He implies that because of the small size of the institution and the importance of community, an individual's conflict with another needs to be resolved.

Belonging to a tightknit community is what prompts some Redeemer graduates to return later in life. Through my interviews, I discovered the presence of "boomerang" faculty and administrators: undergraduate alumni of the institution who had returned to Redeemer to work after receiving their graduate degrees or after working at other institutions. These boomerang faculty members recollected fond memories of their undergraduate experience at Redeemer. Six faculty and administrators that I interviewed were boomerangs, while several others had received their bachelor's degrees at small, undergraduate, Christian institutions very similar culturally to Redeemer.

To illustrate this closeness, I will share a scene I witnessed while I was on campus: an instructor and a student had a meeting on a bench outside the library and, before beginning their conversation, joined their hands together in prayer. This an example of what Donna said was not just about paying lip service to the idea of "we're a family here" but that there is a "…human depth of engagement that we assume we'll engage with each other on more than our job responsibilities."

Governance

How the Worldview Shapes Governance

According to Luke, a faculty member, the "worldview really shapes the operations of this institution." Concretely, this means that the governance of the institution mirrors the representative church system (similar to the Presbyterian church) where elders and deans effectively run the church, not the pastor. As, Jill, a senior-level administrator, stated, "I think it is typical of institutions of similar sister institutions, that comes out of Christian perspective of working together on tasks." In the church system, the elders and deacons are nominated and elected from the body of believers that make up the church.

In the college, this translates to *high* levels of faculty participation in governance, a participation that is required and expected because service to the institution is an essential component to one's job description as a faculty member. "It's the historical nature of Redeemer College and other colleges [like it] that is more shared governance, more listening to the voice of faculty," explained Jill. Therefore, the faculty is heavily involved in governing the institution. Of the five institutions in my study, Redeemer College's faculty was the most involved and vocal in the governing of the institution.

Administrators and faculty define Redeemer College as a "flat organization." This flatness is deliberate, because according to a senior-level administrator, they don't want to "build bureaucracy." At the same time, this senior-level administrator expressed that flat organizations governed by participatory governance are challenging because if something has to move quickly or leadership sees "something that we think needs to be done, we can't just do it." The institution operates as a collegial organization, a very

organized one with processes that have been put in place by group consensus. While Redeemer does have an extensive committee structure to which it adheres, participants don't equate that with a bureaucratic organization, but as an essential component for the organization to run collegially. In fact, James, a mid-level administrator, said there was a "culture of informality…of not having extensive policies and procedures in place but of just sort of contacting and working on relationships and working on who can kind of step into this and pitch in rather than a more structured, policy-driven approach." Later, I will discuss in greater detail the nature of this collegial organization and the collegial framework that dominates the governance of the institution, and what happened in a few instances when administrators tried to bypass the procedures.

In this relatively flat, egalitarian organization, at the "top" are the Board, the president and the President's Council. This Council is essentially a group of administrators who serves, according to David, a senior-level administrator, as "really just a coordinating group to make sure the college works." Senior-level administrators expressed to me their intention to hold steadfast to their commitment of traditional, residential, liberal arts-based education. Interviewees described the president, who came to Redeemer in 2003, as someone who is passionate about the institution, very active and engaged with the goings-on of the institution, and some described him as "hands-on," even in curricular matters. One faculty member attributed the president's occasional delving into curricular issues to his overall enthusiasm and to his still feeling like a faculty member, and not to any issues over control.[19] Unsurprisingly, his involvement

[19] The president was once a former faculty member, though not at Redeemer College.

into curriculum issues has been received with mixed results by faculty, which I will describe later.

The Chief Academic Officer (CAO) is beloved and trusted by nearly all the faculty whom I interviewed. She began as a faculty member at the institution over 20 years ago, and took on the interim CAO position a few years after she began at Redeemer, which then turned into a permanent one. Philip, a mid-level administrator, said, "Everyone trusts her. They know her as a person of integrity and they know that what she does, she really believes in, and she's working hard to do the mission. But they also know that she has a listening ear and she will hear concerns and complaints." Because faculty trust the CAO, continued Philip, "they trust the system." The CAO receives counsel from an Academic Council, which according to Jill, "is not decision-making, it is coordinating and supporting each other, giving a chance to present: here's what my committee is struggling with or here's something I've seen, what's the advice around the table."

In recent years, the CAO began absorbing more responsibilities—such as Admissions and the Registrar—and as a result of taking on so many additional tasks, she created four dean positions in 2012 to divest herself from some of these accumulated responsibilities. All of the four deans were selected from the faculty and they are the Dean for Planning and Effectiveness, Dean for Faculty Development and Academic Programs, Dean for Diversity, and Dean for Adult Studies. Three of the four deans are considered "teaching administrators" because while they have taken on administrative responsibilities, they are still considered active faculty, albeit with a reduced teaching load (they teach one course a semester). The Dean for Adult Studies is purely an administrative role. As one dean said, "If you get down to the nuts and bolts, we're paid

as faculty on a faculty scale. We're eligible for everything that faculty are eligible for, so sabbaticals, course releases, things like that. So we're treated as faculty. We go under the same evaluation that faculty do." For the purposes of my study, I classified them as "mid-level administrators" because I asked them to answer questions from the perspective of their role as a dean. According to a mid-level administrator, the reason why they are "teaching administrators" is because the CAO wanted them to remain connected with students. These four deans form the Academic Council.

The deans serve an important function of bridging communication between administrators and faculty, and maintaining trust between them. David believed that having these positions in place "[t]hat's probably a strength of us, that we don't have…many full-time administrators. We have a lot of teaching administrators." And these teaching administrators play an important dual role, continued David, because they are "involved in decisions over curriculum and teaching but that's because they're also faculty. And that's a strength. It's hard to demonize someone who is also coming from the position of faculty member." A few interviewees shared that when these positions were being created, there was a debate in Faculty Assembly on whether to allow the individuals serving as deans to face evaluation on the administrative evaluation schedule and method (taking them out of the post-tenure review until they stepped down from the Dean responsibility) or keep them on faculty evaluation. One faculty leader argued that it should be the latter because "faculty who are serving as deans, even as those dean responsibilities are big and heavy, do so as people who are formed as faculty members. And so we ignore their faculty identity to our peril…. So the notion of having a professional administrator coming from the outside, who did not have a teaching load at

all but was purely just running things, would not be a welcome." The vote was for the deans to maintain faculty evaluation.

All full-time faculty members are expected to attend monthly Faculty Assembly (FA). Attendance is taken, and the CAO knows who did not attend. Within FA, all full-time faculty members participate on various committees that are involved in the day-to-day running of the institution. There is an extensive committee structure, which I shall describe in more detail when I discuss faculty power.

When the president came to Redeemer, there was no committee in the governance structure that allowed administrators and faculty to plan together. According to David, "It was sort of like the faculty by-laws said we have these committees and this is faculty governance. And the president rolls in the constitution of the institution, but where's the bridge? So we created something called the Planning Council (PC). The PC is comprised of the President, the CAO, the Chief Financial Officer, faculty chairs of the three most powerful faculty committees—Academic Benefits (salary and benefits), Program Review (establishes priorities for growing programs), and Curriculum Committee, a staff representative, a student representative, and a Dean. Anything FA passes costing more than $500 must be considered by the PC for final approval and funding.

The defined and well-represented groups in place allow the institution to govern with a high level of transparency. This leads to—agreed administrators and faculty alike—a trust and mutual appreciation for one another's roles in the institution.

One faculty representative stated that professors at Redeemer operate under a great deal of autonomy and so it's hard to describe a "management style" for the

administration because "We're all professionals doing our job and it's assumed that we're going to do our job." She continued,

> It's kind of like the professor has the authority, the ability to make decisions about what happens in their classroom and in their classes for their syllabus. The institution has some mandates about what is on a syllabus or what is required and we have certain meetings, but we don't have a lot of specific rules or regulations that we need to follow. There's just certain things, a few things we have to do, whether it's student evaluations or our self-study. But the college pretty much kind of leaves us alone.

Top-down mandates are very rare, said Curtis, a mid-level administrator: "Everyone's pretty collegial. You don't often hear people say, 'An administrator told me to do it.' It's just not…that doesn't happen too often." What these two individuals suggest, and is consistent with other interviewees, is that the Redeemer professoriate maintains its relative autonomy and professional authority in the institution.

At Redeemer, the participants—administrators *and* faculty—seem to operate according to what academician Patricia Gumport referred to as a "social institution logic," a mindset that is shaped by the collegial model of institutions, where the shapers of knowledge are disciplines, with faculty driving change and continuity, as opposed to an "industry logic," typically an administrator mindset heavily influenced by the bureaucratic model of institutions, where the shapers of knowledge are markets, and managers are at the helm (Gumport 2002). A faculty leader expressed to me that the reason why she is so vocal in meetings is because she feels a responsibility to be a voice for the institution, to keep the mission and vision for the institution on track. Any potential conflict between faculty and administrators appears to be relatively minimized because of the established processes in place allow voices to be heard in appropriate forums, and because the prevailing worldview values the importance of discussion and

listening. The few times administrative authority tried to prevail (addressed in the next section), faculty responded forcefully.

The Faculty

In fall 2013, there were over 80 full-time faculty members. I interviewed nine full-time faculty members, plus two mid-level administrators who were still designated faculty and continued to have teaching responsibilities. Among the faculty I interviewed, some were faculty leaders in the Faculty Assembly (past and present), department chairs, program directors, member of the Planning Council, and chairs and committee members (present and recent past) of the following: Assessment, Curriculum, General Education, Retention, Economic Benefits, and Personnel. The faculty I interviewed had taught at Redeemer from five years to 36 years. Five of the faculty I interviewed were boomerang undergraduate alumni of the institution.

In this section, I lay out how faculty articulated to me their understanding of their "work" as faculty, their faculty community, and their role in governance.

We are Called to Be Faculty

Similar to how faculty at Stamper College generally expressed the role they embodied as a "vocation," the faculty here, too, understood their role as something more than just a job; it was much more expansive. It was an identity. Donna, a professor, said, "It's the life that we're sharing." Amanda, a faculty representative, said, "It's their calling. It's their career. It's who they are, what they do." David also articulated the faculty work in a type of institution like Redeemer College—mission-focused, small, teaching—as "…it's a way of life…calling."

When I asked why faculty feel this way, Amanda explained, "I think part of it is the Christian base of where that's kind of how Christians feel their work is—it's a calling, that God calls them to help serve. So they see themselves as responding to God's call to serve and the way that we do that is through our interaction with students, with our teaching students, with our interaction with others, with our peers." Therefore, the criteria faculty apply in deciding whether to take on additional work responsibility is less about whether this is something professors should or should not be asked to do, but more about whether it is something that is in the best interest of the institution, the discipline or the student, stated a faculty representative. Donna shared how she views her role in the institution: "…part of my vision of a professor when I came into the life was as a representative and articulator and a passer-on of the community's ideals." Several other faculty and administrators also echoed Donna's vision, and this vision heavily influences the content of Faculty Assemblies.

While faculty evaluations are based on teaching, scholarship, and community service, as a teaching institution, Redeemer focuses a lot of the faculty review on teaching. Faculty write a self-evaluation (self-study form) every other year if they are in a tenure-track position. As explained to me by Philip, a mid-level administrator:

> The first prompt [in the self-study] has to do with mission fit. So it's all about your belief structure and how you are integrating your faith with your discipline. Then there's all material about teaching, so you talk about what you do and how the students have evaluated you and how you're trying to improve your teaching and what things you've tried to put yourself out of the box. Then you tell about your research—what you have done lately, and what activities are you doing…. And the fourth area of course is service.

In much of that self-evaluation, the faculty are asked to address their teaching. Henry, a faculty representative, offered that a person who would not thrive at this institution is

> A person who says my highest priority is my research, particularly that's research that doesn't include the students, it's not collaborative… The focus is on the classroom. And our evaluation runs that way. If we look at the…on the evaluation instrument, to move through the ranks, there's no offsetting. You can't say the person is distinguished in research but they're really not very good in the classroom. There's no offset. Teaching strength stands alone. It has to be there.

Teaching is foremost, and yet not just part of the role of being a professor.

Faculty reflected how teaching was connected to one's identity. Another faculty representative repeated what I heard from many other faculty on how one's teaching is tied to one's identity: "Teaching is so tied to who you are as a person." He proceeded to describe that how they teach is defined by who they are: "What you're doing is there's a body of knowledge and then there's students and then there's a faculty member. And the faculty member has to somehow bring these students and this body of knowledge together in a way that students learn knowledge and skills and dispositions…and it's just really different depending on the faculty member, I think." And the process by which the faculty member does this reflects on who he is because it is different for each faculty member.

Rarely does SLO assessment enter the conversation when speaking of professorial roles and responsibilities. And, according to a senior-level administrator, it wouldn't really be considered an important element in the faculty work role because "The outcomes assessment, relative to the General Education program or to the major area of study, doesn't truly enter into the faculty evaluation."

Institutional Values Writ on a Coffee Mug: Faculty "Fit" and Understanding the "Subtextual Language"

To understand the faculty culture here, it is important to first point out an aspect of the physical space that contributes to the culture. Most of the faculty's offices occupy

former student dormitories near the library and chapel (the center of the campus). Because many of the departments are small (often two to five faculty members), several departmental offices might be on the same floor. This contributes to a high level of daily inter-disciplinary interaction. A faculty representative notes how the physical environment represents the community, "…that it's just welcoming and even that physical thing that if you walk down the hall, the doors are open." Says a faculty member, "…but it really is incredible as far as how well we get along, how much we talk across disciplinary lines." When I walked the narrow corridors, rarely did I see closed doors. Even during my interviews, students and colleagues comfortably stopped by to chat or to say hello. Another contributing factor to the inter-disciplinary interaction is the frequency and intensity of faculty participation on committees. A mid-level administrator speaking in her role as a faculty member said, "And so we interact and we serve together on committees and we do projects and research together across disciplines quite frequently."

Over and over again, interviewees described the institution as a collegial organization, made so by the important value placed on fostering and maintaining collegial relationships. On one level, collegiality is expressed as support and solidarity amongst faculty. For example, during my interview with a senior-level administrator, he illustrated this collegiality by saying that while we were talking, a concurrent event was happening where a faculty was giving a talk to colleagues about his sabbatical work and he was pretty sure that nearly half the faculty were there listening; he added that such a well-attended faculty event is not atypical.

Collegiality is also expressed as a mindset that sets the (desired) tone for your work within the organization. A mid-level administrator articulated an interesting

consequence as a result of this collegial mindset: "One thing I've heard of…institutional cultures either value competence as the thing they value or collegiality as the thing they value…. So if you mess up something in a competence-driven environment, you're going to get fired; if you mess up a relationship in a collegiality-driven environment, you're going to get fired. I think Redeemer is a collegiality-driven environment." A senior-level administrator hosted a session during the fall 2013 faculty retreat to address the "types of spirit we want to foster" (her words), implying the kind of work attitude, professional attitude—the collegial mindset—that was expected of a Redeemer faculty member. For the session, specially made coffee mugs were distributed with the following "types of spirit" she wanted to encourage printed on it: joy, intellectual curiosity, generosity of spirit, friendship, collegiality, and flourishing.

Collegiality at Redeemer also implies a cohesiveness, of being in sync with one's colleagues. Cohesiveness at Redeemer is based on a shared worldview and the expectation that one is there to fulfill the institution's mission. Explained a long-time professor, "…there's a sort of common, shared identity there that is faith-based." Contributing to this cohesiveness is the common language that the worldview provides, what Luke, a faculty member, elucidated as the "subtextual language" where "it's easier for me to get into positions of trust because I speak the subtextual language."

But what happens to the individual who was not raised in this particular religious worldview, who is not part of the Christian tradition, who enters it as an "outsider"? As one senior administrator, sensitive and aware of this, said to me, "There is a group that has, call it 'the power,' or 'the ownership,' that then can be exclusionary when looking to others. So part of the culture here is we are always working on that." But in what ways

that work is occurring, beyond trying to listen to these opinions more, he did not provide examples. One faculty member I interviewed mentioned that if one does not come from the Christian tradition, does not comfortably traverse the language, then feelings of being marginalized or being silenced ensue. And as an individual not from the Christian worldview, he does feel silenced. He confirmed that his was a minority feeling, and that most do not feel like he does. Margaret, a long-time faculty member, considered the marginalization that can occur when people don't have the subtextual language: "…I think they often don't understand the vocabulary, for example, theological vocabulary that may get tossed around here by people who are from the supporting constituency of the college." A small example, she supplied, might be in not "getting" jokes that are bandied about, or misreading cues.

Administrators and faculty ascribed to faculty overall a generosity of spirit (along with collegiality, this was also one of the values listed on the coffee mug). Said a mid-level administrator, "And people are willing to go the extra mile to help you out." A very small example of this is in the demonstrated willingness of administrators and faculty to participate in my study. Nearly 100% of those that I asked to participate accepted my request. All my interviewees, except one (who was not in town), made time to meet with me when they found I was flying out to visit the campus for three days to conduct interviews. One faculty member stayed on campus after-hours to speak with me, and another met with me right before heading out to the airport to give a book talk. When I pointed out to a mid-level administrator how generous faculty were to me with their time, she laughed and said, "That's probably why we feel overloaded! And why we need to see everything, and be part of every decision."

Another aspect of the faculty culture that surfaced with some frequency in interviews when asked to describe the faculty collectively was "humility." This corresponds with the Christian worldview where great value is placed on humility, while pretentiousness or arrogance is frowned upon. As one mid-level administrator remarked, "I think we're pretty humble…. We don't proclaim ourselves. We're kind of like the little sister [laughs]." A faculty member concurred, "The image for many professors is pretentious. I don't think we are. I think we are intentionally not." Part of this humility leads to—from what I discerned from my interviews—a lack of hierarchy amongst faculty. A faculty representative, Henry, speculated this might be because "I think we highly value the individual. We respect…I respect my co-workers because we're equal members of the body of Christ." This value is expressed concretely, Henry goes on to say, in that he doesn't distinguish (or even know) who is an associate, assistant, or tenured individual: "I can look it up, but I don't know," and contrasts that to his prior experience working in a corporate environment where "…you were your position first and foremost. Here, that would *not* be the case." The values of equality and humility correspond with the "flat organization" that participants advanced in interviews.

In an institution where the faculty is a tightknit group, faculty "fit" is a very important concept here. Several faculty and administrators mentioned fit in direct and oblique ways. For example, in evaluating potential new faculty, existing faculty consider, explained Deborah (a faculty representative) things like

> "How would they be as a colleague?" And things like, I imagine other people have to talk about, but given the size of the institution, that's really important too. And often we think about how they relate to colleagues, that's going to continue into relationships with students too. If they're kind of a jerk to colleagues, they're going to be kind of a jerk to students, I think, and vice versa too. So we're looking for good fit in that way—both as colleagues and as students. But as colleagues,

> most departments are two or three or five people. You do want to be able to relate well to them also.

There are two significant ways in which faculty strive for this fit with potential colleagues. The first is the all-faculty job interview. The second is the New Faculty Orientation program for all incoming faculty.

All potential candidates for faculty positions are subject to an all-faculty interview. Faculty participation is voluntary, but if you do attend, you are asked to complete a form after the interview to provide the Search Committee with feedback. Sometimes 30-40 people might show up for the interview, estimated a senior-level administrator. One faculty member recalled his all-faculty job interview and the utter nervousness with which he entered that interview. He recalled that when the job was offered, the CAO made the announcement to all faculty, and as a result he received emails from some faculty who had attended the interviews encouraging the individual to choose Redeemer and/or recalling a specific detail from his all-faculty interview.

New faculty are formally integrated into the institution via the New Faculty Orientation program. The program began in 2010 because, according to a mid-level administrator who was involved in the development of the program, "We hire a fair number of faculty who maybe are not familiar with the Christian worldview, so mentoring and informing them within that worldview so that they can be prepared to teach it." Its purpose is to familiarize new faculty, through a structured and formal way, to the core values and culture of the institution; it is a vehicle for socialization and acculturation; and also provides mentoring support. As a faculty member involved in running the program explained, the "[purpose] is really to help new faculty feel at home here, not just in an emotional sense, but to find their place at Redeemer, to find their

place in Redeemer's mission, and identity, and story." There are three days of orientation in an August Institute. Then the group meets throughout the fall semester about every two to three weeks and for six days in January before the spring semester starts. In the beginning of their second year of teaching, they are assigned a faculty mentor. Meetings might address topics like what does it mean to teach from a Christian perspective.

Professional Authority: The Power of Faculty Assembly

As a senior-level administrator articulated, shared governance at Redeemer College means that committees have "a significant voice considering proposals, or even creating proposals, and bringing those forward to Faculty Assembly." More than any other institution that participated in my study, Redeemer College has a very extensive and intensive system for obtaining faculty input in governance. As I mentioned earlier, service to the institution—the community—is expected from all full-time faculty. As Donna, a faculty leader, said, "[the institution takes] shared governance quite seriously, and it means not just that faculty have a say in what happens around here, but that we are expected to be put to work in doing the tasks of governing and administering the place. 'Cause I think in some places maybe shared governance means you have to listen to faculty. Here, it means that faculty are expected to roll up their sleeves and work on these things." This means that committee participation for all full-time faculty is required.

The primary location for faculty to provide this input is Faculty Assembly (FA). Because the organization is "flat"—technically all faculty report to the CAO (according to the CAO) and not to Deans, nor really to Department Chairs—the Assembly is an important and dominant voice on campus. All full-time faculty members belong to FA and attendance at the monthly meetings is expected. The CAO chairs the meeting, but

faculty were quick to mention that she almost fades into the background. The president occasionally attends to make a report, mainly about decisions of the Planning Committee.

When asked to describe what Assemblies are like, faculty pointed out that the meetings are highly participatory, with *lots* of discussion and debate. A senior-level administrator highlighted the character of FA in this way, "…the faculty meetings, there's probably not people sitting back saying, 'I don't know what the heck this is about, I'm just going to sleep.' " This is not a group where agenda items are presented and faculty do not have much to contribute. Luke, a faculty member, agreed, "Part of the Christian tradition is that it honors discussion, and discovery, and disagreement. Arguing is okay, it's a good thing to do." Sometimes, per some of the interviewees, there is too much discussion and not enough action, particularly if more than the typical two hours have gone by. "But I've learned that discussion is REALLY, really important if you want to have institutional buy-in to something," said a mid-level administrator.

Interviewees mentioned that it is the kiss of death for an initiative if you don't let the faculty discuss it. As Philip, a mid-level administrator (who has been a long-time Redeemer faculty member), described, "If they've been heard and they've had an opportunity to influence the development, then they buy into it." Giving voice, being heard, and having some influence in the direction and shape of a proposal on the table, are essential components to the current synergy in the working relationship between administrators and the faculty. The reason the relationship works, shared Philip, is because "we had the opportunity to discuss, and revise, and improve, and be able to hear lots of different voices and echo back to them 'we've heard what you said, we've made these changes; we've heard what you said, we haven't made these changes, and this is

why.' " And, as I will show, when appropriate faculty discussion and involvement have not occurred, faculty will not hesitate to show their disapproval.

Supporting the FA is an extensive committee structure of more than 50 committees that are chaired and populated by faculty exclusively (including the three Deans who have faculty standing). Overseeing these committees is a "committee of committees"—the Executive Committee (EC)—led by the CAO and three faculty members appointed by vote of the FA. The EC meets every spring to assign committee appointments and committee chairs. Each full-time faculty member fills out a form to rank preference for which committee(s) they would like to join. To ensure that all faculty participate equally, committees are assigned a point value based on the amount of work required, and each faculty member's total committee participation must meet an established point load. For example, the Personnel Committee, which reviews promotion and tenure, has the highest workload; therefore it is awarded the highest number of points. This is also the only committee that is appointed by vote of the FA.

According to Philip, these committees "actually get to make specific recommendations, and sometimes decisions—that's what's really unique." And another mid-level administrator shared with me, "We have so many committees because *everyone* wants to know what's going on." Donna stated that, "In the oral report that the HLC [Higher Learning Commission] evaluating team gave in 2010 [for the reaccreditation], they said something like, 'At most colleges and universities, there is a faculty member for every committee. Here, you might say there's a committee for every faculty member [laughs].' " And a senior-level administrator says, "And some will complain that the committee structure is heavy. And I usually point out, let's do away with the committees

and they [the administrators] will just make the decisions. And then that's not what they want either." But the FA—through the committees—does not run the institution unchecked. In this system of checks and balances, all FA recommendations that involve a minimum expenditure of $500 must be reviewed and approved by the Planning Council.

Administrators Beware: When Faculty Feel Procedure has been Bypassed

A senior-level administrator asserted that faculty take the lead in introducing any proposals for curricular change and he might sometimes try to "plant seeds here and there." There is trust between administration and faculty, but not without moments of tension over the years. Tension arises between administrators and faculty when faculty feel that established procedures have not been followed, especially on curricular issues. For example, said a mid-level administrator, "…when things come about that seem to be outside of that planning process, that is when people get pretty frustrated because they're sort of like, 'Wait. What's going on here? This isn't part of the process.' " Henry, a faculty representative, verified this:

> I think programs should come out of departments. We come into a problem where you want to start a program that doesn't naturally fit with anything you currently have. So where is that going to come from? So sometimes programs like that will come out of the administration, but it's usually because there's no existing department that would create the program proposal because there's nobody here in that area.

However, what results, continued Henry, is it "Usually makes it harder, it's a hard go. It's a hard sell. Cause there's no departmental ownership of it."

Administrators and faculty cited two recent examples of this kind of administrative interference—administrators trying to get a program proposal passed without going through the regular committee process—in my interviews. These two

examples were raised consistently and repeatedly across the interviews, suggesting that these were significant events to them.

The first example involved a senior-level administrator who put forward a proposal in FA in spring 2013 to offer the first year or the first two years of college to low-income, inner-city high school graduates of a neighborhood program in their neighborhood—creating a satellite location. A member of the Curriculum Committee (CC) explained that this was actually a program, when it was proposed to them, that "we resisted, that…was coming from administration, but did end up going through different channels and getting implemented." It ended up going through the General Education Committee instead. When I asked how this happened, the CC member explained,

> The [senior-level administrator] came and met with us [the CC] and we said if you're going to propose this, then you're going to have to make all these changes and provide all these additional details. And then we did have a small group that met with the CAO and the chair of General Education and [Dean] to talk about that. And then at that point, in that meeting, the CAO offered up the suggestion of having a concept proposal that could come from General Education or Curriculum. Either one. And I knew we didn't have any agenda space any time soon and they wanted it done right away. So I said it was okay if General Education did it for them. My committee wasn't happy with that, which I felt bad afterwards. I felt like I let them down on that. So then it came through, there was a lot of debate in the faculty [Assembly], and I think it passed by one vote to go forward with it. But then at some point it made…it wasn't just a concept proposal, it was actually in place.

In describing how events unfolded, this CC member still sounded like he regretted letting his committee down.

When it was presented to faculty, they did not respond with a resounding "yes." It passed after a couple of tie votes, and in the third vote—written ballot—it passed by one. A senior-level administrator admitted, "And you lose chips by doing that [introducing programs]." A faculty member who challenged this proposal in FA did so she said, not

just to be contrary, nor to doubt because an administrator was initiating it, but in order to faithfully challenge how this would fit the vision and mission of the institution.

A second example is online education. Senior-level administrators proposed partnering with an organization to deliver an online adult studies program in spring 2013 (a program for adults to obtain a BA). The proposal "failed miserably," according to an administrator, in FA. A mid-level administrator explained that senior-level administrator involvement immediately put faculty on their guard, "And it's usually when it's something related to innovation where it feels like it's on the fringe of the mission of the institution. So right now we have a lot of suspicion with regards to online programs and online education. And so there is some sense that that's being forced on faculty who aren't ready to do it."

When I asked a senior-level administrator what faculty would think about administrative involvement in academic issues, he argued that senior-level administrators do have a role in curriculum:

> Our roles are pretty well-defined. I know I get criticized sometimes for jumping into the development of something…. And that triggers some resentment, "Leave us alone, you administrators." But the reality is in this ever-changing, volatile world of higher education, we could either hire a consultant every time to come and do things, but that gets expensive, and second, consultants don't necessarily read the faculty and get the faculty buy-in either…[Administrators] kind of take our risks by getting a little hands-on sometimes to move something forward….the reality is—and this is kind of my view of administration—I am here to serve this institution and its teaching/learning enterprise. And if that requires me…to do a little work on the side, I will gladly do it.

Comments from mid-level administrators and faculty support the fact that when a non-faculty member proposes something academic, then faculty become suspicious. A mid-level administrator said quite frankly, if there is an attempt by an administrator to start a program, then faculty will not support it: "I think it's more of a power struggle. I don't

think there's anything wrong with the initiatives that are proposed. It's just the expectation is that the faculty are the ones that are supposed to say what we want to do next with the academic part." A senior-level administrator provided me with an example from 2008 when a senior-level administrator brought forth a proposal for introducing graduate programs that was defeated in the FA. Two years after it was defeated, the departments brought forth a proposal for a specific graduate program that passed. When I asked her why it passed this time, she said, "Because it came from the faculty. There are reasons, but that was a significant reason. Instead of the [administrator], top-down, saying 'Do graduate programs,' you have two departments who are well-respected…saying let's do graduate programs." Therefore, it's really important that decisions come out of the committees and that faculty hear from the committees, because those are their peers. And, said a mid-level administrator, "And it's not me telling them, it's the committee that tells them. So it's their peers. And so they can…they might be mad, but they still say, 'Ok, my peers think this is an issue.' "

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO), SLO Assessment, and the CLA

The major driver to address assessment institution-wide at Redeemer College was the Higher Learning Commission (HLC)—one of the six regional institutional accreditors that accredits postsecondary institutions in the North Central Region. HLC has five criteria for accreditation. Criterion Four is "*Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement.*" On its website, HLC articulates Criterion Four as:

> The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments, and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness for student learning through processes designed to promote continuous improvement (https://www.ncahlc.org/Criteria-Eligibility-and-Candidacy/criteria-and-core-components.html, accessed 3/10/15).

Where SLO assessments and the CLA come into play is in section 4B of the criterion which states that "The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through its ongoing assessment of student learning." More specifically under 4B,

> 1. The institution has clearly stated goals for student learning and effective processes for assessment of student learning and achievement of learning goals.
> 2. The institution assessment achievement of the learning outcomes that it claims for its curricular and co-curricular programs.
> 3. The institution uses the information gained from assessment to improve student learning.
> 4. The institution's processes and methodologies to assess student learning reflect good practice, including the substantial participation of faculty and other instructional staff members
>
> (https://www.ncahlc.org/Criteria-Eligibility-and-Candidacy/criteria-and-core-components.html, accessed 3/10/15).

A mid-level administrator involved in the reaccreditation recalled, "When we had our 2000 Higher Learning Commission review, one of the things that we were, we got dinged on, was assessment of programs: 'How do you know your students are doing what they say they're doing?' So we had to come back in 2004 with a follow-up report where we developed our assessment system." A faculty member also recollected that the HLC feedback was "when like many institutions at that time, I gather, we were told that we weren't robustly doing assessment enough. This when assessment was becoming much more a priority for the accrediting agencies and it wasn't yet part of our language and culture." While David, a senior-level administrator, described HLC as a "big stick—you start with that," referring to the process of getting everyone on board, Jill, another senior-level administrator, added that it wasn't just HLC that brought assessment to faculty's attention. According to her, in the early 2000s, one of the departments did not have a good result in a state accreditation and so was put on probation for a year: "And I think

people saw, if you don't play the game, if you don't cooperate, you're going to be in big trouble. There's no choices here." In this way, faculty became sensitized to the serious consequences of not addressing accreditation requirements.

In preparation for the 2004 HLS follow-up report, a faculty Assessment Committee was created by the CAO but run under FA. It tasked every academic program to design learning outcomes. Philip, a mid-level administrator, remembered that "[The faculty] set up a structure so that faculty, so that academic divisions, would have to submit annually 'this is a report on what we are going to assess and what we've learned and what we're going to change.' " And it was a mid-level administrator (since retired) overseeing the reports who was "the person that kept on banging on everybody's windows and saying, 'Do assessment! Do assessment! Do assessment!' " recollected Philip. To encourage departments to include assessments in the early 2000s, Jill said her office handed out gold, silver, and bronze awards at FA to make assessment "into a funny and lighthearted thing" so "I felt that by maybe 2004, 2005, departments were doing a much, much better job. And before that, you had departments who didn't even buy in: 'We can't assess it, it's too thoughtful or esoteric, we can't assess this.' " But administrators felt that they needed to do more.

The president, as a former professor of psychology (before moving into administration), is a self-professed advocate of student learning outcomes (SLO) and SLO assessment. And it was upon his arrival at the institution, recalled Jill, that he helped show the faculty and administrators that while they had made progress with assessment at the departmental level, they needed to do something at the institution level: "And it was [the president] coming. [He] coming from another institution that said, 'Boy, you're

doing better at the department level than my other institution, but [they] were better…you don't have any externally normed at the big level."

Senior-level administrators had heard about the CIC/CLA Consortium from information that the CIC regularly sent out to its members about the activities of the Consortium, as well as from CIC invitations inviting its members to join the Consortium. The CAO brought the CLA to the attention of the president in 2005 or 2006. The decision to consider seriously joining the CIC/CLA Consortium came about because, according to a senior-level administrator, "It [the CLA] coincided with more thought about general education objectives and appointing our first Director of General Education." Redeemer had begun revising its general education objectives as it also worked to incorporate more assessment to address reaccreditation requirements. According to a senior-level administrator, "We were revising our General Education learning outcomes—we have the big six—we had a Director of General Education and we weren't doing too much to assess General Education learning outcomes. We saw that CLA gave us good opportunity to assess at least two of them. We also didn't have any nationally normed. We had internal things, but nothing that was externally normed or evaluated." The president was also supportive of joining the CIC/CLA Consortium because he had joined the institution already thinking about how the institution should look at institution-wide SLO and the assessment of them. The president's thinking, according to a senior-level administrator, was "Ok, look around. Others are trying this [the CLA], we should try this too. Let's get going, we'll figure out how to incorporate it as we go."

The faculty chair of the General Education Committee at the time remembered meeting with the CAO and saying, "Well, we really looked into this [the CLA]…it looks

like it would be a helpful way to gather data for two of the five or six outcomes that we have." The CAO gave support and approval of the concept (of introducing the CLA on campus), and then the General Education chair brought it to the attention of the General Education Committee. The chair at the time recalls that the committee reviewed the CLA and approved it in 2007 for use in the 2008-2009 academic year. He stated that it did not require going through a vote in Assembly. And the reason that general assessments like the CLA don't need a vote of the Assembly, according to this former Chair, is that "…the justification would be that this is within the committee's mandate, so we don't have to go to the faculty to approve how they're to realize that mandate."

As mentioned, the CLA, and the opportunity to join the CIC/CLA Consortium coincided with the institution's revision of their General Education, specifically revising the General Education learning outcomes and finding assessment instruments to measure them. According to a senior-level administrator, the HLC was "influential" in pushing the institution to think about the assessment of their General Education outcomes. The institution's website states that the assessment of General Education at Redeemer includes "assessment of student learning outcomes evident in the general education curriculum." There are six general education learning outcomes articulated on the website; the CLA is used to assess the following two (retrieved and adapted from institution's website on 9/17/14):

- Communicate effectively orally and in writing.
- Reason and analyze the validity of arguments.

These outcomes are assessed, according to the website, through "student and alumni self-assessments, faculty assessment of students, the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), and student outcome essays."

Because the General Education Committee determines which assessments are involved in assessing the General Education SLO, this committee oversees the implementation of the CLA on campus. While there is a Director of General Education, a faculty member who gets one course release a semester for taking on these duties, the director does not manage nor direct anyone. The Director, according to a faculty member, "organizes the data collection, collects the data, tabulates it, organizes that, makes a report to the [General Education] Committee." And according to the director, neither she nor the committee has any ability to mandate change based on assessment results.

Building Faculty Support the Redeemer Way: The Critical Role of The Assessment Committee

At Redeemer, when faculty and administrators referred to faculty resistance to SLO assessment and the CLA, they referred to vocal resistance. Recall that the faculty culture here is rooted in the Christian tradition, and so debating, questioning, and discussing are essential parts of the professorial identity, linked to serving the institution. Initially, when the faculty were exhorted to "Do assessment! Do assessment! Do assessment!" according to Philip, faculty were "So resistant. [They would say] 'We already know that we're doing our job well. Why do we have to prove it to somebody else? We can just tell.' So, according to her, it took a long time to build the culture so that people could understand that assessment was really valuable and important and that it could be used to drive changes." Another faculty member involved in assessment recalled faculty reactions in those initial years: "Oh, yeah, a lot of negative feelings at first."

Because initiatives, especially academic ones, will not happen without faculty agreement, it was necessary to establish faculty support. A mid-level administrator

emphasized how important it is for faculty to be heard on campus. One way to grow faculty support of SLO assessment, he maintained, was to keep discussions of it alive: "And so this is something it's got to come up from the bottom as well as suggestions have to implanted. It's almost like you have to get them to start thinking about it in order for changes to be able to bubble up, but if you don't talk about it they're never going to think about it. " It echoed what a senior-level administrator described to me as his tactic of "plant[ing] seeds here and there" to get faculty thinking about certain issues.

A senior-level administrator remarked that to obtain faculty buy-in to assessment, it was critical to have their peers persuade them to say, "Look, this can be done." Therefore, the Assessment Committee (AC) played a critical role in securing faculty support of SLO assessment. According to a senior-level administration and faculty, the AC is not a committee that faculty flock to join. According to a senior-level administrator, "So a joke is, if you forget to turn in your form [asking to be assigned to various committees], you'll be on the Assessment Committee." On the institution's website (accessed 9/17/14), the AC's mandate is:

- To formulate and review all college assessment policy and procedures and makes policy recommendations to the Faculty Assembly;
- To review assessment reports from academic departments, select co-curricular areas of the college, and the general education committee
    - To identify and disseminate trends in student learning,
    - To ascertain understanding and implementation of the assessment process, and
    - To recommend mentoring in assessment for departments or programs with difficulties maintain an effective assessment program;
- To review college-wide evaluation data to identify and disseminate trends in student learning; and
- To offer workshops for faculty pedagogy development to improve student learning related to trends identified.

Thus, its charge is to examine assessment measures, mostly external measures like the Student Satisfaction Inventory, the NSSE, and the CLA.

Dominic, faculty member of the AC from those early days, remembered that the "Assessment Committee did a lot of coaching and training of departments in those years before the HLC 2010 re-accreditation."

> Dominic: We had a consultant come in, talk with us about it. We figured out how we were going to inform the faculty, and how we were going to help them understand the purpose of assessment. I think a lot of people confused assessment and evaluation, and those initial steps in the process. So it wasn't that we were looking at "We're going to look at your assessment data and say you're fired," but we really need to look at this to see how we can improve student learning outcomes.

The Director of Assessment at the time also recalled that when assessment was being ramped up at the institution, "[I] listened a lot. Tried not to be too directive, but tried to understand their feelings behind it, what they were struggling with. Tried to guide them, I guess I would say." As a well-liked faculty member, Curtis was acutely sensitive to make sure that the message of the aim of assessment was not perceived as an evaluation of the professor. His message reinforced the AC's.

In order to familiarize faculty with assessment, the committee held workshops and offered their committee members to meet with a department or to meet one-on-one with a department chair. According to a senior-level administrator, there was a lot of one-on-one with professors, with the main message being "we'll help you do it, and here's how you do it." In my interviews, some faculty articulated to me that initial vocal resistance from faculty to SLO assessment often originated from faculty in the Humanities rather than those faculty in the "pragmatic" arts like Education, Nursing, and Business. A senior-

level administrator shared her recollection of what humanities faculty members were telling her:

> "We don't do it. You *can't* do it. [One department] in particular, *lots* of pushback, "We can't do this. I'll tell you. I know when someone has it. I'll tell you when they have it." And I think it was a little bit fear of someone's going to look at what we do and think "you're not performing adequately" or "you need to change something"; and that it wouldn't be intrinsic of "We know. We're going to change." Someone else saying, "Your assessment and your kids aren't getting critical thinking. You need to improve critical thinking."

But the faculty members I interviewed from the professional departments (two from Education, one from Nursing, and one from Business)—the practical disciplines—expressed that, yes, they were more familiar and experienced with assessment because their departments are accountable to external, discipline-specific accreditors. As one department chair from one of these departments explained, assessment is pretty much embedded and the faculty members are very familiar with it.

As part of the faculty discovery and discussion process, faculty had opportunities to voice their concerns about assessment. A few interviewees recalled that some faculty concerns over assessment stemmed from worries about interference with teaching. A former faculty member on the AC recalls her conversations with faculty during this time:

> …there was a little kind of resentment there—healthy resentment like, "What are you…you telling us what we can teach?" And that wasn't what it was and we had to communicate that. She recalls telling faculty, "You can choose your learning outcomes, but you just have to measure if you're meeting them." Or, how you can do that better. And faculty begin to understand that they do that in the classes everyday. The good teachers are doing that everyday. And there was more buy-in when they finally got that.

As one mid-level administrator recalled, there was a "…'you're messing with my area of expertise' " kind of feeling.

Faculty who initially resisted SLO assessment at the institution framed it around the question of "Why do assessment?" One faculty member shared with me philosophical argument she raised at the time about why the institution was doing assessment:

> When it looked early on that it might be merely quantitative and reductionistic. And also I was more concerned when it was, "Well, we just have to do this to pacify the power-that-be," because if you do something with your left hand like that, then it can come back to bite you. But if you do it in a principled way, if you do it in a way that you're really owning it and using it for the purposes that guide you, well then it's far less likely to be a threat. The way that we have developed our assessment procedures over the last 13 years, I think, has been a healthy one.

This faculty member raised the concern that assessment was just going to be for accountability to external groups.

When I asked faculty about what they thought the aim of assessment was (or their initial belief about what they thought the aim of assessment was), they articulated concerns about assessment as evaluation of the professor rather than for the purposes of improving learning. Some of the initial faculty resistance to assessment generally stemmed from the suspicion that they were the ones being evaluated. Donna was one of those vocal faculty members initially concerned about assessment.

> Donna: …that was a bumpy process because I think early on it was easy for faculty to feel like they were…that the institution was being suspicious of them. "Oh, now you don't trust what we've been doing all this time. Now you're asking us to prove it." And especially speaking as someone in the humanities discipline, the earliest assessment instruments that were offered or envisioned were rather rigidly quantitative and we worried at times that they would reduce or eliminate or not look for some of the things that were most important to us in our vision for education. So early on there was some resistance and some fear and hesitation about it.

And Donna worried that if assessment results were not good, then blame would be placed at the feet of faculty.

> Donna: …I think there was worry at some stage that if our students didn't perform in certain ways as defined by the instruments, that the blame would be laid on

> us….I think structurally one way it [the concern] was addressed was with the constant reassurance from the Assessment Committee and the Director and the administration that what we're assessing when we do assessment is the whole college, we're assessing the whole package and the whole process with the goal of future improvement, not with a sort of punitive 'We're going to go get the [ ] Department for not getting the worldview thing right', for instance.

Another senior faculty member confirmed the faculty worry that SLO assessment signaled a mistrust of faculty:

> There's sort of a…that we're not trusted, basically, to do an effective job with students, that we have to demonstrate that in some kind of public way, is a new thing that, again, impinges to some degree on the freedom of faculty to do what they want to do, which is one of the reasons why a lot of us went into this field. We were attracted by that. So there's sort of that perception that we're given less freedom, and there's less confidence that faculty can deliver the goods without oversight, without some kind of accountability.

According to a senior-level administrator, the president as an advocate of "outcomes and measuring outcomes" made a clear distinction to faculty between assessment and evaluation: assessment was assessment of student learning and evaluation was evaluation of faculty and programs. This distinction is made concrete in that a faculty member's student evaluations for a course are reviewed by the Program Review Committee and SLO assessment results are reviewed by the AC. This senior-level administrator recalled emphasizing to faculty the message that "We're not evaluating you, we're seeing how students learn."

Faculty that have been and continue to be closely involved in assessment activities on campus (members of AC, General Education Committee, deans, former Director of Assessment) often evoked the continuous improvement argument to their colleagues to foster support of assessment activities.

> Dominic: …what we wanted to focus on was helping them [the faculty] understand that assessment data is only going to make you better. It's not for us to evaluate you, or anybody to evaluate you. And I think once the faculty understood

> that, they started doing their assessment reports and getting that assessment back, it became interesting to them, because it really is, it's kind of researching your own field. So closely related to research. So I think once they understood that they could take that data and actually meaningfully use it, I think that's when we got more buy-in.

In interviews, they articulated that it was important to provide faculty with a clear message that SLO assessment, including the CLA, is about improving teaching and learning on campus. It is not about the evaluation of one's teaching.

Some faculty mentioned to me the aim of assessment for accountability. One negative of seeing this is interference on faculty work by external groups.

> Mid-level administrator: Some will say that this is government interference, or accreditor interference, with the way that colleges work. But then others, I think, understand that being able to convince others that what you say you're going to do, you're actually doing, there's value to that. I think there's probably a greater proportion that are in the latter camp that see the value to using data to be able to drive changes than people who are in the former that say, "Oh, this is just Big Brother getting involved."

Another way of understanding accountability is less threatening. As a faculty representative relayed, "Well, the aim is to try to figure out to what extent we're doing what we say we're doing." Said another faculty representative, "…I also think we [the faculty] understand the importance of accountability and we're in an era of, we have limited resources. We have to be able to explain why when we're doing something, what's the justification…. We understand that that's what assessment provides for us."

We All "Own" Assessment Now

According to the institution's website (retrieved and adapted on 9/17/14), "Assessment of student learning is a crucial part of Redeemer College's efforts to develop and maintain excellence in its academic programs. These efforts are based on the college's mission which strives to offer the highest quality of instruction to prepare

students beyond Redeemer." Therefore, the process of assessment of student learning at Redeemer, according to its website (accessed on 9/17/14) is "a collaborative process driven by faculty, staff, students, and administration and overseen by the assessment committee." The faculty leader who was the one who often brought up concerns about SLO assessment in those early years in FA and with the Assessment Committee, said that once conversations occurred where faculty concerns were allowed to be voiced, discussed, and allayed, and faculty as a group agreed that assessment was moving forward (and, really, there was little choice because HLC was demanding it), the faculty who had reservations, herself included, went with the group consensus, and rolled up their sleeves and got down to determining how to structure SLO assessment into the institution. So by the time the CLA was introduced to faculty by the General Education Committee in 2008, so much discussion had occurred amongst faculty by that point, that the then-faculty chair of the committee recounted that there was very little reaction from faculty to the CLA.

Currently, the primary focus of the AC's work, according to a member, is to review each department's Assessment Plan (AP). Specifically, AC examines the portion of the AP that addresses the assessment of student learning. According to the AP instructions (from the Fall 2013 version that was shared with me), the purpose of the document is "an evaluative description of the academic department and its programs that gives evidence of planning for the future in harmony with Redeemer's mission, consistent with college-wide strategic planning, and supported by data which evaluates student learning. It should articulate the framework for planning and assessment of learning and describe a projection of resources and planning." So the AP really focuses in on course-level and program-level SLO and SLO assessment.

It requires departments to articulate expected SLO. Where the Assessment Committee looks closely are the sections that ask a department to address the "Results and Interpretation of Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes" and "Strategies to Improve Student Learning: Assessment Cycles." For the latter, departments are asked to

> …include a multi-year collection of strategies the department has implemented to improve student learning for identified outcomes. Each strategy should identify which learning outcome is targeted, details regarding the planned change, an implementation date, a date on which effects of the planned change will be ready for re-assessment, and (*after* the re-assessment date) the results on student performance on that learning outcome. It is expected that each academic department will have several strategies in various stages in the assessment cycle: some will be in development or planning stage, some will be newly implemented, some will be implemented and waiting for re-assessment time, and some will be ready for reassessment.

All APs are posted on a shared drive so that any faculty member can access them.

According to a committee member, "So we would look at department learning outcomes, we would look at some of the tools that they're using for assessment, whether that's external assessments or internal, we would see if they're trying to make changes based on the data, and if they're closing that assessment loop, and if those change are really in fact being done. And if we have any sort of feedback for the department or any sort of suggestions, then we communicate that back to them and we could also work with them if they want further work as they continue…" Another committee member says that "…they read really carefully what they say they've learned and what are their strengths and what are they doing in terms of programmatic changes and how is it being modified over time."

The committee has a "light" touch with their colleagues when it comes to providing feedback and follow-up on SLO and SLO assessment. A committee member said that the committee is perceived more as a working committee and not one that puts

demands on faculty—just there to provide helpful information. While the AC encourages departments and faculty within them to develop learning outcomes, they have no jurisdiction to enforce such things. So if someone is just not interested in creating learning outcomes (not that this has happened with any frequency according to mid-level administrators), you almost "reach a stalemate. They won't change and unless they get a direct order, and it wouldn't even be from our committee to change it, it's not going to [change]…."

The expectation of administrators I interviewed is that assessment is part of a professor's job. David said, "Teachers understand now that their responsibility doesn't end with the grade, it ends with the outcome." A faculty member explained what this means:

> It comes with the definite nudges of administration. So, for instance, our new guideline for course syllabi, which came with administrative impetus and then through Curriculum Committee and was approved by the Faculty Assembly, mandates that those big six [General Education] learning outcomes are going to be in all syllabi. Well, that's a top-down initiative but one that is trying to apply steady pressure for something that we can all buy into.

As part of trying to incorporate assessment more concretely into the professor's job, according to a member of the Curriculum Committee, "We ask for rationale for [course] proposals. Part of that rationale includes asking for assessment data. What's the assessment, what's the rationale? It's kind of a rationale and assessment section on the proposal. And as part of that, what's the assessment data that led to this change or led to proposing this new program."

Of the faculty I interviewed, faculty representatives particularly were the ones that stated that the most significant impact of assessment on their role has been that it has added more work. They feel this more acutely because they are responsible for

submitting annually the APPP. A mid-level administrator shared with me what he hears from them often is that "…assessment just adds to the burden." One faculty representative offered the following thoughts on how it adds to the work:

> Most really didn't like it. I hear the comment, "I spend more time assessing what I do rather than really trying, doing what I do." "I spend more time assessing than teaching." Or, I know sometimes it almost holds you back from some ideas because we'll think, "Maybe we'll want to do A," and then we'll ask, "Well then, how are we going to assess it?" "Oh, that's going to be really difficult or problematic. I'm not going to go do A, even though I think maybe A might be interesting to do." But when you look at everything else that comes with it, it's like "Ok, I won't do it."

And here is what this faculty leader shared with me:

> I think it [the initial negative response from faculty] comes out of, in my opinion, comes out of the issue that I was mentioning earlier: here's another thing that we have to do, that puts another demand on our time. If what you cherish most about being a professor is to have the freedom to pursue your own intellectual interests and structure your time, then this is another nuisance [laughing].... and just skepticism about are we really going to change anything as a result of this.

But one faculty representative expressed that while it takes up time, it is a helpful process: "…it's another form to fill out. It's valuable in helping us to think about where we should go in certain areas."

Maintaining a "Light" Touch with CLA

Administrators argue that the impact of assessment on faculty has actually been relatively light. At this point, according to them, assessment and assessment results (i.e. CLA results) have had little impact in curricular change or pedagogical change. A faculty member involved with the CLA affirmed that the CLA been a "light touch" on campus—"And once again, it's part of this campus culture that there's not an awful lot of, um, structures of assessment, accountability." And a mid-level administrator agreed that the administration has not been authoritative when it comes to assessment: "I would argue

that people have the freedom to decide how they want to assess their program….I don't think we've been too prescriptive with what people can do." The Assessment Committee doesn't (and can't) really demand anything from faculty. As one of the former leaders of assessment initiatives said, "I don't think there have been any major curricular revisions as a result of the assessment program."

From my interviews, mid- to senior-level administrators do not seem to be leaning (at this point) in the direction of pressing on faculty to make any changes based on CLA results. The focus of the General Education Committee and the Director of General Education seems to be, at this juncture, on presenting CLA results. Explained a faculty representative,

> And we had just gone to a chair meeting where they showed us some of those results. And it's kind of, kind of focused in on the Gen Eds but it also has impact on the major courses that the student takes. And certainly the administration hasn't said, "Oh, your department is low in some of these assessments so you have to do better." They share the results with us and kind of encourage us to try and use them appropriately so that we can improve our curriculum, not forcing us to do anything.

This faculty representative said that she plans to take the CLA results back to her faculty at their department faculty meeting and use it to foster discussion, "And then kind of process it to say, 'Is this important to us? Is there something that we want to do? Or, it is kind of more departmental goals that we're trying to achieve?' " But another faculty representative who also attended that Chairs meeting had a different reaction to it: "For some of those really general ones [like the CLA], I find myself thinking 'I don't know what we can do to change that.' " So discussions about CLA results are really up to individual departments.

A member of the Assessment Committee acknowledges that it is still really early days yet at the institution in terms of utilizing the data—"CLA has not made a large, it would not have made a large impression on general faculty members, I don't think." Another reason faculty reaction specifically to the CLA has been light is that while faculty have had to work to write SLO for their program and/or department over the years, and have had to submit reports addressing SLO assessment, the CLA results have had relatively little direct impact on individual faculty. As one faculty member involved in the CLA described it. "… there's not necessarily all that much teeth in it. " Here is how a mid-level administrator commented on the CLA's impact: "It didn't affect them because there weren't decisions that were made that hurt them."

That said, some administrators do envision a more future intervention on their part in departments based on CLA results. One senior administrator said that where CLA results in some majors have not been as robust as administrators would have liked, "we need to directly intervene on the basis of those results," though did not specify what those interventions would look like. And another mid-level administrator expressed his desire for what he would like to see happen with CLA results:

> I'm hopeful that some changes will be made. The reason that we passed out [the CLA results] to the department chairs is because the General Education Committee is looking at those same splits but not by major but by clusters of majors. And I'm envisioning that the committee is going to say, "Ok, we've noticed that if you have a degree in the social sciences that your writing is not meeting expectation as frequently as people who are in the humanities." So what can we do as an initiative to change or what kinds of things can we do. So it might be host a workshop, meet with those faculty in those departments. What can you do in your curriculum in order to up the ante in terms of the writing or performance task types of things you're doing.

These are the kinds of issues that are currently being discussed in the General Education Committee and the Assessment Committee.

Assessment is Here to Stay

There are no indications that accreditors are going to turn their backs on requiring institutions to measure SLO via assessments, said the administrators at Redeemer, so assessment is not going away. "And so the best thing [faculty] can do," said a senior-level administrator, "is to use it to their advantage. To use it in a way that really does improve student learning." Phil corroborated, "Oh, I don't think anybody thinks it's a fad. I think everybody knows that it's here to stay. I don't get that sense at all that people say I don't need to pay attention to this phenomena of assessment."

Faculty and administrators alike point to the shift that has occurred at Redeemer in the little more than 10 years since it first introduced SLO assessment. A senior-level administrator noted this significant difference: "It is so typical when a proposal is made in Gen Ed or in a major, that part of the rationale for change is assessment findings. It's part of our culture. It wasn't that way ten years ago." Here are two faculty stating how assessment has become institutionalized at Redeemer:

> Donna: By the time we got to our 2010 review, assessment had become fully institutionalized. By that point, it was not something we were putting on as window dressing, but something that was deeply in our processes.
>
> Deborah: Now, it's [assessment] just in place. That's what we do. It's the way the institution works.

A senior-level administrator spoke of this shift in assessment from something completely ancillary to faculty to something that is part of the changing nature of the professorial profession, and how assessment is diffuse in conversations among faculty: "But remember, all these people [faculty] are in their own guilds, too. They're hearing about it at their conferences. They're hearing about it with colleagues at another institution. So it's a profession—now I'm thinking of higher ed as a profession in general—that is

evolving. And I think with really good direction and guidance from the whole assessment world." While faculty at Redeemer to incorporate course-level and program-level assessment into their work, it will be interesting whether Redeemer will be able to integrate findings from the CLA to change what they do in their classrooms.

Next I turn to the University of Carlow to examine how administrators sought to build faculty consensus in an institutional organizationally and culturally very different from Redeemer's.

University of Carlow: Tentative Steps Toward Student Learning Outcomes Assessment and the CLA

Introduction

The University of Carlow is a private, independent, non-sectarian university in one of the largest cities in New England. This urban campus is relatively compact, scattered with Victorian-era homes juxtaposed to starker, mid-twentieth century buildings. The institution, founded in the early 20th century originally as a junior college, is closely tied to the ebbs and flows of the city in which it resides. Historically, manufacturing predominated in the city from the late 19th century until about the 1970s. In the 1970s and 1980s, as the industrial jobs disappeared, the city fell into decline as middle and upper class residents moved out to the suburbs.

When I visited the University of Carlow in November 2013, I stayed in the downtown area where I witnessed first-hand the city's efforts at revitalization: old buildings that had been gutted and neatly renovated, but many of which seemed unoccupied; common areas where it appeared the grass and plants were taken care of, but which were relatively empty of pedestrians. Before I arrived at my hotel, I had been advised by my university host not to walk about the area on my own, but to always take the transport provided by the hotel, and to have hotel transportation drive me to and from the university. The hotel employees also suggested the same, so I did.

The University of Carlow joined the CIC/CLA Consortium in 2010, implementing the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) on its campus in 2010. Senior-level administrators wanted to join the Consortium because they wanted to use data generated from the CLA in conjunction with other data such as the National Survey of Student Engagement and the CIRP Freshman Survey (administered by the Higher

Education Research Institute) to inform and improve student learning, increase student retention and persistence, and to revise their Core Curriculum. Senior-level administrators also believed that being part of a consortium would be an opportunity to engage in dialogue with peer institutions around best practices in understanding and applying CLA results and obtaining faculty buy-in for assessment activities.

An institution facing a reaccreditation visit from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) in fall 2014, a year from my visit, the University of Carlow is the "youngest" institution in my study not only in terms of history of using the CLA, but also in its reaccreditation timeline. Thus, it offers an opportunity to see an institution in a relatively early stage of incorporating student learning outcomes (SLO), SLO assessment, and the CLA.

Carlow has a top-down, bureaucratic model of organization and yet it also operates according to an informal, collegial model. McConnell and Mortimer (1971) described it in this way:

> The basic dilemma in the university is the appropriate balance between bureaucratic structure and formal authority, with their emphasis on accountability and rationality, and functional authority and collegial organization, with their stress on informality. In other words, the dilemma is between power and influence (pp. 3-4).

We see this being played out in Carlow in that faculty understand that they must address SLO and SLO assessment in order to meet the requirements of external accreditors (and senior-level administrators' interest in SLO and SLO assessment), yet they are not pressed too hard by administration. Because assessment discussions were in an early stage of taking root and shape at Carlow, I sensed hesitancy amongst the administrators and faculty I interviewed with how best to proceed with assessment at the institution.

Administrators were feeling their way around assessment messaging to faculty in order to obtain their support and engage them, while pushing forward their desire (and requirement) to establish SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA on campus. Administrators are not issuing mandates. Instead, they are securing faculty support from the bottom-up by utilizing informal networks and collegial relationships with a very small group of faculty to build a base of knowledge and support for SLO assessment, hoping to gradually win over larger faculty support.

In this case study, I first provide some background information about the University of Carlow, including details of a faculty strike that nearly ended the institution, and how it might have subsequently developed within administrators a sensitivity to secure faculty support for initiatives. The strike and its aftermath have greatly influenced the institution into what it is today. I then address how the institution as a whole operates, according to those I interviewed, in a bureaucratic manner, but also through informal channels. In a bureaucratic organization, one might think that issues of SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA would be initiated, implemented, and organized by administrators—and to some extent they have. But I show that administrators are actually building faculty consensus at the ground level by recruiting respected faculty leaders and grooming newer faculty to become the purveyors of the CLA and assessment in general.

Background

According to the institution's website, the mission of the institution is to offer career-oriented degrees and programs and to provide the curricula in "an international, culturally diverse supportive learning environment" to help prepare its graduates in an "increasingly interconnected world" (accessed from the institution's website on 3/11/5).

This mission, according to a senior-level administrator, addresses the two "foundation stones" of the institution—an "international, open, global types of university" and "a career orientation." This is not to say that the liberal arts have been abandoned, she continued, and she pointed to the core curriculum required from all undergraduates as the institution's commitment to liberal arts, but it is not a liberal arts school.

Senior leadership and faculty articulate an understanding of their institution as a career-oriented institution, as a training ground for future careers. One mid-level administrator described it as a "working man's institution" because the institution really grew and prospered as a result of the G.I. Bill, when the men worked in the factories during the day and came to the university to get their degrees at night. The graduate, professional, and health sciences programs offer career-oriented master's and doctoral degrees and have nearly 2,000 students enrolled (NCES, fall 2013)

The second focus at Carlow is to prepare the students within a learning environment that is international and culturally diverse. To this end, one of the central things the institution is trying to do, according to a senior-level administrator, is to "create an atmosphere where people who are very different from each other can come, be together; they're unified by their work here, scholarly work, even though they remain different in their religious, ethnic, racial, economic backgrounds." The diversity of the student body is readily evident. One can just sit, as I did on a fall weekday morning, along the University's main artery—a paved sidewalk closed to vehicles, along which several of the main campus buildings are situated—and see the diversity reflected not only in skin color, but also in dress and in language.

The institution has a large international student population. In fact, this diversity is one of its salient features, currently putting it as one of the most racially diverse universities in the country by *U.S. News & World Report*. Among the nearly 3,000 undergraduate students, 14 percent are classified as non-resident aliens (NCES, fall 2013). Additionally, 35 percent are black or African-American, 27 percent are white, 18 percent are Hispanic, 3 percent are Asian, and 2 percent are two or more races (NCES, fall 2013). The institution works to support this diversity, said a senior-level administrator, by allowing "people to be themselves fully, so long as the being of themselves fully does not intrude upon the fully being of someone else. That's the, I would call it, the essential liberal idea." The three biggest programs by the number of bachelor's degree awards conferred in 2012-2013 are Psychology; Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services; and Public Administration and Social Service Professions (NCES, fall 2013).[20]

Of the faculty I interviewed, nearly every one mentioned that the diversity of the student body also includes academic and financial diversity. The admissions rate is 64 percent, and 16 percent of those admitted enrolled. Approximately 49 percent of undergraduate students are receiving Pell grants (NCES, fall 2013). There are over 120 full-time faculty and over 350 part-time faculty at the university (NCES, fall 2013).

An Institution on the Brink of Extinction

It became very clear to me from all my interviews that "The Strike" was a seminal moment in the history of the institution—almost all of my interviewees referred to it, often emphasizing that it was the point at which the institution was either going to survive or it would not and shutter its doors. Though the institution had experienced

[20] I did not include programs and award levels that are offered as a distance education program.

faculty strikes before, this one, which took place in the 1990s, was the longest and most significant one. Because this was an event that garnered national attention, I will provide the broad strokes here in order to preserve the institution's confidentiality. In order to supplement what I learned from my interviews, I drew additional details from the archives of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and a 2003 article in the *Journal of Academic Ethics*, which provides a detailed case study of labor relations at the University of Carlow.[21]

According to accounts, the president announced that the institution had to eliminate more than 50 faculty positions—amounting to almost a quarter of the unionized faculty—in order to reduce its deficit. These positions would be eliminated without the one-year pre-notification or severance pay (*Journal of Academic Ethics* article). Because of a declaration of financial exigency, the president argued that this preempted any contractual obligation the institution had governing layoff procedures and severance pay (*Journal of Academic Ethics* article). The faculty union filed a federal lawsuit for violations to its contract provisions. In addition to these complaints, the faculty union argued that "laying off 50 faculty sacrificed program integrity" for the short-term sacrifice to save cost (*Journal of Academic Ethics* article). The president agreed to honor the contract until its summer expiration.

In this combative climate, faculty contract re-negotiations were underway and the faculty union voted to authorize a strike if the new faculty contract was not signed by the summer deadline (*Journal of Academic Ethics* article). Unable to come to come to an agreement, about 70 percent of the full-time faculty went on strike. Within a week, about a third of the original striking faculty returned to work without a contract. According to

[21] Two of my interviewees were also interviewed for this *Journal of Academic Ethics* article.

the author of the *Journal of Academic Ethics* article, the faculty who returned cited the following reasons for crossing the picket line: "they could not financially afford to lose their jobs to permanent replacements, the union was asking for too much given the university's financial distress, a continuation of the strike would destroy the university, and they wanted to help students enrolled in their programs complete the semester." According to some faculty who crossed the picket line and were quoted in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, they felt that the union was being unrealistic and did not seem to want to negotiate a contract, nor to acknowledge that the institution's financial situation was so dire that concessions had to be made for the institution's survival.

However, a union negotiator argued that the main sticking point was not the proposed salary cuts but academic freedom and governance. He said, "They [the administration] want complete control of every aspect of university life—choosing books for a course, deciding requirements for a major" (*Chronicle of Higher Education* 1994).[22]

Meanwhile the institution's financial troubles continued, and student enrollment continued a downward spiral. NEASC put the university on probation during the strike and stated it would lose its accreditation if its finances did not improve. And the faculty within the institution turned on the faculty union. The Faculty Council, a body of elected faculty representatives at the institution, unanimously approved a resolution to condemn the union and its leadership, with part of the resolution stating that the union "has ceased representing the best interests of the faculty and has in fact been harming the university by discouraging students from attending Carlow" (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 1994). It is unclear what involvement, if any, the administration had in this.

[22] I have altered the year in order to maintain the institution's confidentiality.

The university eventually informed NEASC that it would be shutting down, but it ended up reaching a deal with United, an international nonprofit organization with ties to a religious organization. United agreed to provide the institution with the tens of millions required to keep it functioning in return for majority representation on the Board and implementation of some special programs on campus related to the aims (primarily religious) of United. The deal did allow for Carlow to remain non-sectarian. A United spokesperson likened the organization's interest in securing a stake in the University of Carlow as no different to religiously affiliated individuals and churches in the past who started some of the nation's best private institutions (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 1994). As a result of the deal, NEASC agreed to maintain the institution's accreditation (solely based on the potential influx of funds) on a probationary basis.

The deal was also conditional, according to the article in the *Journal of Academic Ethics*, on Carlow's Trustees reaching a resolution on the faculty strike, including the faculty union's decertification at Carlow. A financial settlement with the faculty union was reached. The faculty union at Carlow was no more. Significant damage had been done as a result of the inability of administration and the faculty union to come to an agreement. According to the *Journal of Academic Ethics* article, by the time the strike ended, there were just a few hundred full-time undergraduate students, a 90% decline since the early 1970s.

Rising Out of the Ashes

Fast forward to fall 2013, and it is a vastly different school than it was right before and during The Strike. The economic downturn that began in 2008, though, presented fiscal challenges as it did for higher education institutions across the country,

according to a senior-level administrator. A faculty representative describes how faculty went without raises for a few years and most of the upper administration took voluntary pay cuts so the institution wouldn't have to cut as many positions. But they have experienced growth in enrollment numbers in recent years, and growth in academic programs offered so, says a faculty member so there is a sense that the University is emerging from the lean and hard times: "It's emerging in this new kind of form. And it's very exciting thing to be around and to have some small role in helping to shape." As I walked the campus, I saw the improvements made to the campus due to recent university construction projects. According to an article in the Fall 2011 issue of the alumni magazine, the institution spent over $7 million on beautifying the campus, updating science labs and student dormitories, and putting in a new food court. I spent my time in-between scheduled interviews in the relatively new Learning Commons, an 18,000 square foot common space in the renovated library. Also, ground had been broken for a new business school slated to open in September 2014.

It is hard to pinpoint exactly, but through my conversations with faculty and administrators, I got the sense that because of their acute awareness of the institution's past financial troubles and the Strike, which brought the institution to its knees and almost ended it, the specter of it continues to be felt on campus, to be felt in how faculty participate in governance and work with administrators, and with how administrators govern and work with faculty. It is almost as if, in the wake of the Strike, and further fiscal constraints felt by the 2008 economic downturn, faculty and administrators tread cautiously around one another, not wanting to stir the waters. I shall explore this further.

The Faculty

Of the over 120 full-time faculty, about 40 are undergraduate faculty, a senior-level administrator told me, with about half of them involved in teaching General Education courses.

I interviewed 11 full-time faculty members, eight of whom were located in the School of Arts & Sciences, and three who were in the School of International Relations and Public Administration. All taught in the undergraduate programs. I interviewed full-time faculty only; I did not interview adjuncts (But some of the full-time faculty I interviewed, at one point in their early career, were adjuncts at this institution.). Of the faculty members that I interviewed, they had been teaching at the University of Carlow from one year to over 25 years. One senior-level administrator I interviewed had been there more than 30 years, both as a faculty member and as an administrator. One senior faculty member I interviewed had been through The Strike.

The faculty I interviewed included program directors, department chairs, faculty participating in various NEASC self-study committees as well as the NEASC Steering Committee, faculty who participated in CLA in the Classroom workshop training, members of the General Education Committee, and faculty leaders and faculty representatives in the University Assembly and Faculty Assembly.

Because the university is not a research-oriented institution, the institution places priority on teaching and advising students over research. Nearly every interviewee mentioned the important role of teaching and advising students. One faculty member expressed that it was not uncommon for a faculty member to have up to 60 student

advisees; another senior faculty member I interviewed estimated that she was advising 150-200 students at the time of our interview.[23]

A Very Diverse and Multicultural Faculty

When asked to characterize the "faculty" (collectively)—whether there was a group identity—participants paused in consideration. Unlike at the other institutions I visited where faculty and administrators would readily come up with a series of adjectives to describe the faculty collectively, interviewees at Carlow struggled with the question. Many eventually responded by applying the word "diverse." They meant culturally, ethnically, racially, religiously, ideologically, and also by discipline (from Philosophy to Chiropractic). A mid-level administrator who has been at the institution for well over three decades said, "You have every, everything. You name it, they're there…. It's as eclectic a mix as you've ever seen." So trying to corral and identify the faculty as a group was not possible. But as I will show when discussing the Faculty Assembly, this diversity poses challenges when trying to unify Carlow's faculty to speak as a group.

The small size of the faculty from the undergraduate faculty I interviewed from the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of International Relations and Public Administration contributed, most faculty said, to a high level of interdisciplinary collegiality. A professor who had been at Carlow just over a year commented that the small number of faculty members in each department is a welcome change from where she did her doctoral work—a large, public institution in the Midwest. There, she explained, there were about 25 professors in her department, and she illustrated how her experience there contrasts to her experience at Carlow:

[23] This senior faculty member explained that this high number is due to the fact that she directs a program, and she is the only one currently advising students in that program.

> People wouldn't work together, people who weren't on speaking terms, like shouting matches during meetings…people that, I couldn't get all the people that were relevant, in terms of research, on to my committee because they weren't on speaking terms with each other. These kinds of things. It's been really nice here because people are in different disciplines so there's less of a competitive dynamic.

A faculty representative from another department also mentions the interdisciplinary, friendly nature of the faculty members: "All of our departments are so small we don't really form little tight knots…. We tend to think very broadly, so we tend to come back to things like discussions about evolution, which is intriguing to people in Biology, Philosophy, English, across…. Intellectually inclusive."

I am "Professor"

A professor, Sam, who has been at the institution for close to twenty years explained to me that students at the University of Carlow, when addressing professors, almost always call them "Professor": "But I'm fascinated by how much respect they have for faculty. They *always* call me professor. They would *never* call me by my first name and I don't insist on these things. Everywhere I was, we would say 'Dr. Smith' or 'Dr.' and here there's always 'Professor.' And to me, there's nothing more honorable than to be called that… There's no higher compliment one could be given." While the formality of address might suggest a distance between the student and the professor, here at Carlow, Sam suggests that it, in fact, indicates the respect students have for the position and the deep bonds that professors have with their students. Sam described that being a professor, "It's an identity that's really personal." A junior faculty member also described teaching as personal.

At the heart of being a professor at Carlow is teaching and advising. "I guess what we typically think of professors doing is teaching, having office hours, having some role

on campus, but then sort of being involved in research and not being around. And that's not the model I've been asked to fill," says Sam. By "model," Sam refers to how his role as professor departs from a more traditional model of professor, one that he himself experienced as an undergraduate student. He goes on to explain this further,

> I think it helps them [students] to know that they can talk to me about their concerns, about their career, and about many other kinds of things, which I don't think I would have felt comfortable talking to a professor when I was an undergraduate…. I remember a professor that I was really enchanted by a lecture he had done. And I had done all this extra research, and I just had a couple of questions. I saw him walk into…he was walking down the hallway, he went into his office, I immediately knocked on the door and not 10 seconds later, he looks at his watch and he says "You know, I've office hours tomorrow at 10 if you want to come by then." It wasn't even rude, but it was just what you expected. And so we definitely have maybe changed that. Students here really do email and come by.

Sam is not an outlier in his relationships with his students. Here are three more faculty from all different disciplines describing their relationship with students:

> James: I have 50 student phone numbers in my cell phone. And they text me, I text them. It's that close feeling, and I love that.
>
> Tina: That's kind of where I see myself: is just kind of working with the students at their vulnerable moments early on. That's where I think you can really make a difference. Kind of the vocational calling of it is getting students that are confused about where they are and where they're going and getting them on the right track.
>
> Emma: Everyone is obsessed, absolutely obsessed, with the well-being of students…. there isn't a culture of self-absorption, of obsessions with one's own scholarship and one's status and one's ego that one finds at so many other places, good grief…. There isn't an obsession with egos here. The obsession really is where our students are at, why we're serving them….

To illustrate this culture of caring, Emma shared with me an example of a student athlete who didn't show up for class, so the professor contacted the Director of Athletics noting that there was no paperwork indicating the student was going to be away for a game, and the Director then asked the coach to help track down the student.

The evaluation of reappointment for those on tenure track are their "work with students, work with the discipline—so that is the research expectation—work with colleagues, and work with the university in general (so to even promote admissions), according to a senior-level administrator. "Work with students" is a fundamental criteria in the tenure-track evaluation. The evaluation of "work with students" is based on student evaluations, taken quite seriously by the University Personnel Committee. Negative evaluations from students from a course, even if they might seem outliers, are to be addressed by the faculty member in his/her narrative. While advising students is an important responsibility taken on by professors, a faculty member informed me that the time spent on advising students is not part of the evaluation, neither are student learning outcomes nor assessments.

Governance

A Distance Between Them: Administrators and Faculty

To visit the offices of the president, her Cabinet, and senior administrators, you must ascend to the top floor of the tallest building on campus. Once you step out of the elevator, you immediately notice the commanding views of the city from the floor to ceiling windows. There is a hushed atmosphere as you walk from the elevator area to a large anteroom that is sparsely decorated with two circular settees. Large canvases adorn the walls with photos and descriptions of campus individuals and historical moments in the institution. "That floor is built to be intimidating," said a mid-level administrator. The offices are located behind locked doors to which you need to be buzzed in order to enter.

Most interviewees describe the president in a positive light. She joined the institution in 1999, having served on the Board of Trustees since the Strike's conclusion

(and put there as a result of her close ties with the religious organization that funds United). She is not an academician. One mid-level administrator described her as an "effective politician" who "looks for buy-in." As this administrator goes on to say, the president's general approach is that she "looks for consensus" but can be directive when necessary." Several interviewees mentioned that the president emphasizes being transparent (in her decision-making) and cited as an example how she, at the beginning of each year, lays out the budget in a presentation to all staff and faculty. The president is described by a few as very "hands-on," but this is not meant in a negative way. Rather, it is meant to say that she is actively involved in the running of the institution and that that activity is not necessarily perceived as intrusive by the faculty, nor regarded as inappropriate.

Underneath the president is a network of administrators. According to the IPEDS Data Center, in fall 2013 there were over 120 full-time "Instructional Staff," and over 120 full-time in "Management." For comparison, at Redeemer College in fall 2013, there were over 80 full-time "Instructional Staff," and 50 in "Management"; at Stamper College there were over 70 full-time "Instructional Staff" and 20 in "Management"; at Grant State University there were over 270 full-time "Instructional Staff" and 60 in "Management"; and at Morrisville University there were over 20 full-time "Instructional Staff" and 10 in "Management" (IPEDS Data Center, fall 2013 data).

By necessity the administration has grown, said Rahim (a senior-level administrator), because of the number of regulations that higher education faces today and the responsibility of complying to those regulations; so it's hard *not* to have a large administration. Another senior-level administrator reaffirmed how expansive the

reporting requirements have become: "With much more regulatory, accreditation, legal types of oversight and obligation. Those sorts of things cannot be done by a faculty group that meets once in a while, even if it's monthly or weekly. It needs to be somebody's primary obligation, and we call that person an 'administrator' [laughs] who is hired to be responsible for some part of the overall pie of overlapping obligations that come from the law." Rahim said, "Faculty ask administrators, 'What exactly is it that you do?' A lot of it doesn't even have to do with higher education anymore."

Rahim explained that once you move into the administrator role, even if you have come from the ranks of faculty, a distance begins to occur "despite my efforts" because there is less that is shared between them. To illustrate this, he shared with me that when he eats in the dining hall, faculty are surprised to see him, and that once a faculty member confessed to him, "I'm kind of afraid of you." Hannah, who began as a faculty member, then moved to a mid-level administrator position and is currently a senior-level administrator, recalled that when she first took an administrator position she kept attending Faculty Assembly so they

> …somewhat politely, but also procedurally and bluntly, they disinvited me. I mean, they said, "No, you're really *not* a faculty member now. You're this other thing." And so I originally remember feeling a little bit rebuked or rebuffed, and then upon reflection thought, well they were right. I'm doing this other kind of position now…. They see, and correctly, I think, that you have a different role and you bring a different vision to things. A good academic administrator knows and recognizes faculty prerogative in, at least for academic administrators, I believe best served by somebody who holds faculty appointment, which I do. And so knows the game, and knows the rules of it, and honors the prerogatives and obligations that attend to it, but also knows that there are other things that need to happen, and so brings certain skills set with that.

Hannah continued to say that one important responsibility of the administrator is to promote and ensure that some big picture conversations—such as learning outcomes and

how to measure that—are being put to the faculty's attention. It's not that faculty are not having those conversations, or aren't doing that within their own courses, it's trying to encourage that this conversation happens across the institution and at higher levels, and involves, in her words, "perspectives that are more integrative."

Top-Down Governance and Informal Relationships

Just as with trying to describe the faculty collectively and having a hard time of it except to say "diverse," faculty at Carlow characterized governance at the institution inconsistently as well. While formally the institution operates under shared governance (on the academic side), many faculty and administrators described the institution as "top-down." Tina, a faculty representative in Faculty Assembly, referencing a recent statement made by the president, said that the University Assembly and the Faculty Assembly (which I describe in the next section) are "advisory in nature…we pass resolutions, but it doesn't mean that they're in effect until the Board says that they are." Another faculty representative on Faculty Assembly said that because of the past history of faculty strikes, the "administration dominates—they largely make the decisions. They have stronger hand," but the good news is that they are "capable, competent, make good decisions."

Faculty also applied words such as "bureaucratic," "corporate," and "political" to the governance structure. A faculty member, Gerald, described the "bureaucratic" perspective to me this way:

> I would describe the institution as very, very bureaucratic. The administration is, makes decisions, and operates… The president calls her group a Cabinet, and they all wear suits, and they operate very bureaucratically. So the governance of the university operates in a very bureaucratic model…. There's a Deans Council that actually makes a lot of decisions. And that is all administrators…. You follow organizational lines. If you have something wrong, you have to go to your supervisor. You don't go across lines. I'm not going to go to my boss's boss and talk to them. I'm going to go to my boss. All of that is very clear.

Olivia, a faculty representative, described the institution as corporate and political by contrasting it to what she thought higher education institution would be like:

> Olivia: I would say I saw it a very democratic place, where people made decisions collaboratively, where it would be very, I guess, slower-paced in terms of that we would be deliberative in making decisions and wouldn't make decisions impulsively. It would be very thoughtful and there would be a process and things would be very organizes. Roles would be clearly defined. And there would be a focus, of course, on scholarship and contributing to disciplines in meaningful ways.
>
> Me: And to what extent do you feel the reality, the institution in which you work, aligns with that conceptualization? And places where it surprised you?
>
> Olivia: I guess it surprises me how business-oriented it has become.
>
> Me: Could you say more on that?
>
> Olivia: Yeah. That we spend a lot of time thinking about what are our numbers now, what they will be. We also spend a lot of time jockeying for positions and competing with other disciplines for faculty positions, and how are we going to get what we need and get the resources that we need.

The president, who is not an academic by training, might have influenced this bureaucratic/corporate/political description of governance at Carlow. Instead, the president has a background in managing non-profit organizations and was chairman of Carlow's Board prior to becoming president.

What Olivia referred to as "jockeying for positions," Tina described as the "political cultural element" of governance. This is important because even as faculty describe the institution as top-down and bureaucratic, which would imply a very structured institution, faculty and administrators also speak of the looseness of governance, what Tina told me with a half laugh about the process of governance at the institution, "As somebody who does political science, it's kind of hard to wrap your head around how the institution's actually [run]…." When pressed to explain further, she said, "I mean, there's formal institutions, but the actual nature of the way in which decisions

are made does not seem to follow a very clear process." Gerald shed additional information on the collegial/bureaucratic tension:

> I think because everybody wants to work in a collegial institution, because collegial is what you want to work at. Because our relationships are so collegial, it's a good place to work, and we do have collegial relationships. We all know each other, we like each other, both administration and faculty. And so you don't want—bureaucratic is almost like a bad word. And I teach governance, so I feel like I can be detached enough to say, "Yes, this is the model that we are and that's not a dirty word." So I feel like I can say that without feeling like it's a derogatory statement towards the university.

In bringing up this collegial working relationship, Gerald touches on how administrators, too, described to me their management style as "collegial," implying that they were accessible, that they were not "suit" types where they were driven by procedure. And a faculty leader on the University Assembly agreed that there is this bonhomie between faculty and administrators: "Mostly there's a feeling of camaraderie with the administration." Another faculty member, Daniel, said: "They know us. We know them. I think in some says that breeds goodwill because there's such a close working relationship."

So running underneath the structure is a network of informal relationships between administrators and faculty. And it seems that administrators, whether intentionally or not, downplay the top-down nature of the institution through their courtship of informal ways to get things done. Tina provides some insight of this when she said, "I sort of came to the conclusion a while ago that they're [higher education institutions] not necessarily quite as democratic as you would think. They're very top down, because it's ultimately accountability by the Board of Trustees at almost every school, so we have channels to influence things. It kind of depends who are the people on those bodies and how well do they work together, how loud are they as an organization,

and…also, how attentive are they. I think that's a big thing." These "channels" echo what I heard from several faculty I interviewed who identified this informal way of the day-to-day governing of the institution.

There are two drawbacks to a formal institution working via informal relationships. One is that the *process* of governance can seem unclear to faculty. Said Tina, "…there's a kind of a very loose, undefined relationship to the formal governance bodies—the representative bodies. So sometimes it's kind of uncertain how certain courses get a Gen Ed designation, or they lose one, or these decisions are made. It's very hazy." The second is that it is very dependent on the personalities sitting in the positions of power. Sam, a faculty member who was once very active in faculty governance, noted that the concern is such that should different personalities inhabit the positions, then the application [of power] "could be dangerous" for faculty. That is certainly not the case currently. However, structurally speaking, if different personalities were in the top layer of administration, then the possibility for autocracy is there. Marco, a professor, described it currently as a "benevolent dictatorship [laughs]...she [the president] doesn't interfere with curriculum or any kinds of faculty stuff as far as I can tell."

Concerns Arise Over an Ineffectual Faculty Assembly

The reason (based on my interviews with faculty) why a lot of the governance occurs via the informal network may be because faculty and administrators perceive that the structure in place for faculty governance is currently ineffectual. Thus, working through informal relationships, particularly when so many faculty articulated a positive, supportive relationship with the CAO and other senior to mid-level administrators, may

be a way to bypass the perceived ineffectiveness of the governance that is there to supposedly advocate for their interests.

Much of the shared governance occurs through the University Assembly. The University Assembly does the more commonplace and day-to-day governing of the institution. It is comprised of elected members of the faculty, designated members of the administration, and students elected by their peers (representatives from Student Government). As Tina mentioned, though, while the University Assembly and Faculty Assembly pass resolutions, nothing comes to pass until the Board signs off.

The faculty members of the University Assembly convene separately as the Faculty Assembly (FA). Membership is based on proportional representation from the academic units. There is an elected president of FA. As presented to me by a FA faculty leader, FA's areas of emphasis are representation of faculty issues ranging from employment concerns to workload, academic concerns ranging from mentoring junior faculty members and adjuncts, to academic integrity issues. Interviewees—both faculty and administrators—indicated that the FA as a unit in the formal structure of governance could be stronger and more influential than it currently is. Here is a selection of quotes from faculty and administrators about FA:

> Olivia, former FA secretary and faculty member: I would say low influence and power.
>
> Marco, faculty member: I have had people tell me "Don't go on FA"…. because it's ineffective. Because it's a waste of my time. I would say…I'm trying to think of the things that they've accomplished in the last decade and I can't think of anything.
>
> Sam, faculty member and former leader in FA: …it's our fault as faculty members that we've allowed this to happen. I feel it's [Faculty Assembly] become irrelevant. I feel that it's probably not serving the general faculty voice, and it's just been unsuccessful in so many different kinds of endeavors. In my opinion,

> it's lost its credibility even…. I feel like the FA has become invisible…. The FA is not acting in a way that gives it the credibility to do what it has the power to do…. It used to be able to represent a faculty voice…. But I feel like we're lacking that consensus and the value of that consensus in our current state. I do think that because of the relationship between administration and faculty, that we're not in immediate danger because of that, but it's bad practice and should be something that we address.

The central problem seems to be that what interviewees identify as a strength of the institution—diversity—is what also makes it challenging to tackle big issues in a substantive way in the FA. Because the FA faculty representatives are drawn from all the different schools in the institution, graduate and undergraduate, and the schools and programs have such different needs and interests, it is hard to get people to agree. And because of this diversity, according to Marco, "So nobody can agree. In that setting, no one can agree on what's happening…. So they had to re-do the Faculty Handbook. It's taken them 10 years to re-do the Faculty Handbook…. there's no unity in the sense of having a unified purpose to their…the programs are not integrated into the university in that way." As a result, the members in FA can't really rally around common interests. Said a senior-level administrator: "Not where I'd like them to be. The problem is that they are united in interest by lowest common denominator." He continued, "I come out of an era when faculty were very active—they saw themselves *as* the institution, and administrators merely as facilitators…. Then the pendulum swung to administrators."

Vocal faculty critics of the FA, like Sam, charged that FA does not take on substantive issues like curriculum or discussion of the appropriate role of the CLA: "Yeah. It would be wonderful. That would be a perfect forum for something like that [discussion about the CLA]. And to educate others as to what, you know, its potentials are and why we want…what its debate is, what the debates are. Yeah, that would be a

great forum for it…but I don't think it came through that mechanism." Sam also referred to the fact that there is no Curriculum Committee that exists under FA, which I found surprising. Explained another professor, "We have a lack of structure. A large lack of structure…in a lot of different ways. So, let's say I wanted to start a new course, there is no Curriculum Committee; the Provost just approves." Yet this is the same professor that also described Carlow as very bureaucratic.

One senior faculty member had an interesting outlook on why the FA might not be as effective or influential as it could be: "…most of the people who are really active in those forums are non-tenured faculty. When you're an un-tenured faculty member, well you're willing to take on this task because you know you have to, it shows university service [part of the evaluation]. But also those people don't find themselves in a position to take stands that maybe are going to…whereas…But what should be there are people in their mid-years who are tenured…. and those people are either missing in the faculty or they are [not in the leadership] positions [and they should be]" This faculty member cast the lack of effectiveness in terms of power.

However, a faculty leader in the FA challenged the depiction of the FA as weak. She feels that the institution respects and follows-through on the tenets of shared governance. For example, she pointed out that the president of the FA is invited to address the Board of Trustees every time the Board meets, "and the Board is keen to hear not just developments but concerns and thinking of the faculty as a collective body through its Assembly." She proceeded to say that it is her contention that the FA and the University Assembly wield quite a lot of power to influence university-wide decisions: "Oh, quite a lot actually. Quite a lot. You know the history of this university is such that

the administration is very sensitive—very, very sensitive—to the faculty. Very, very sensitive. So that recommendations from the faculty, whether through Assembly or through academic units, are taken very seriously and with good reason." Another faculty member also observed that the FA seems to have quite a bit of power, but attributed that to the president of the FA: "[she] seems to have quite a bit of power, and influence, or some political relationship in the administration, and she also seems to have her hands in a lot of different things, and there seems to be a voice within the FA." While I was unable to ascertain whether recent past presidents of FA enjoyed similar levels of influence with the administration, this again hearkens to the importance of relationships rather than the role or function of committees within the institution.

There are two examples of how academic decisions, decisions that impact faculty, are not being made with FA input. One recent example from multiple sources is that the Deans Council recently came together and made a decision that a certain percentage of courses were going to start meeting three days a week (to include a Friday class) instead of two days a week. And FA was not consulted on this decision. Gerald, a professor, recalled, "So there was anger about that decision, about the lack of consultation, and they brought in—the FA—brought in the Student Assembly. And found that they had also not been consulted." This is a big deal to faculty because typically Fridays are used as research days for faculty. Also, students work on Fridays (and the weekends). When I asked James, the University Assembly faculty representative, for his thoughts about this recent development, he said,

> My prediction is that faculty simply won't [go along with this top-down mandate]. And they say, "Ok, everybody turn in your schedules with these new Friday classes," and no one's going to do it. They're just going to say, "No, I'm going to teach this class on Monday and Wednesday like I always have." And then it's

> going to be up to he president to get the Deans to enforce it. And, who knows. Come back in a year. We'll see how this works.

A second more important example is the General Education revision.

Undertaking a General Education Revision With Faculty but Without the Faculty Assembly

Under state law, one-third of the undergraduate degree needs to be taught in General Education (the Core Curriculum). The University Assembly created a Committee on General Education about a year and a half ago (approx. early 2012)—populated by 15 faculty members who were recommended by the schools and colleges that have undergraduate teachers, and chaired by the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences. According to James, a faculty representative on the University Assembly, he recalled that it was the CAO who initiated the formation of the General Education Committee, and asked the Deans to recommend faculty members who would be very involved. A senior-level administrator corroborates this but added that the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences also brought it to the FA with the CAO. But, added James, senior-level administrators did not exert a heavy influence on the process of putting together the Gen Ed proposal, "Well, in this case, the CAO is really actively working to try and empower the faculty, which is nice. He really didn't say, 'We want this done this way.' He said, 'This needs to be updated. You guys come up with a proposal.' And they have. And I think it's a great proposal so hopefully that will happen."

While the committee is separate from the FA, it is important to note that the committee is comprised of undergraduate faculty and revisions are based on feedback from faculty who teach undergraduate students. According to members of the committee who I interviewed, the committee was charged by senior-level administrators to develop

a curriculum focused on competencies and learning outcomes. Additionally, according to a senior-level administrator, a major goal for the institution's General Education curriculum is to promote analysis and writing of the kind that the CLA assesses. Therefore, a few English faculty members wrote a writing-intensive proposal for the Gen Ed revision. The process has been as transparent as possible, according to faculty committee members, with numerous Town Hall-style meetings convened for undergraduate faculty to give feedback to the committee. There have been over 20 revisions to the General Education proposal. Once the University Assembly passes the proposal—and it was going up for a vote in fall 2013—then the idea, according to a faculty member of the committee, is to come up with assessment tools "for figuring out are we actually achieving what we're supposed to be achieving." This is where something like the CLA would factor in.

When asked why the General Education Committee had to be formed outside of the FA, the response from committee members was that in order for it to make progress toward a revision, it had to be taken outside of FA. Again, it harkens back to the diversity of interests/voices in FA. As one senior-level administrator mentioned, it also wouldn't be appropriate to have individuals from the College of Chiropractic debating General Education curriculum for undergraduates. To further underscore the non-role of the FA in this process, the General Education proposal, once complete, will go straight to the University Assembly for a vote, bypassing the FA altogether. As one administrator explained, it was necessary for this committee to have some administrative involvement because of the practical aspect of the administration providing input on issues such as accreditation, controlling costs, etc., and more importantly, the revision process was a

way for faculty and administration to have dialogue—she emphasized that the presence of administrators on the committee was not a "power play…. Some around may believe that, it wouldn't surprise me to hear that…it was not that."

Once the General Education revision is adopted, a senior-level administrator expressed her hope that the Assembly will establish a Core Curriculum Commission that, according to her, "will have a responsibility to report to the Assembly but will also function with some autonomy," though it is yet unclear what the boundaries of this autonomy are. Written into the proposal is the creation of a compliance officer role and an assessment officer role. According to the most recent draft of the General Education proposal that I read during an interview (I was unable to obtain a hard copy), the proposed role of the compliance officer is as follows:

> …with the Office of the Registrar and the Deans of undergraduate degree-granting colleges, to ensure that undergraduate degree programs and courses included in the Core Curriculum conform to General Education requirements. Additionally, the compliance officer reviews syllabi of courses receiving first-year experience, foundations, and competencies designations to ensure these courses satisfy their designated requirements. Instances of non-compliance are reported to the GEC (General Education Committee), which will review the case and recommend an appropriate course of action.

Meanwhile, according to this version of the proposal I read, the Assessment Officer "coordinates the data collection efforts, collecting and compiling performance measures for assessing the achievement of General Education objectives." The proposal lists several performance measures, one of which is the CLA.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO), SLO Assessment and the CLA

Slowly, the topics of student learning outcomes (SLO), SLO assessment, and the CLA are beginning to be presented to faculty. According to Gerald, a faculty proponent of SLO assessment (from her work as a faculty member at a prior institution), assessment

here at Carlow "is starting to become as important as it should be. Assessment is incredibly important. We live in a world where you need to have learning outcomes and assess learning outcomes and know what your students are learning. We are behind the eight ball. We haven't done that." From discussions with the interviewees, the major drivers and proponents of assessment on campus, especially the CLA, have been the president and the (former and current) CAO. And certainly the institution's upcoming New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) re-accreditation (fall 2014) has triggered a focus on developing SLO and adopting SLO assessments for the institution. In fact, according to a senior-level administrator, NEASC requested that the institution specifically address assessment and student success for this upcoming accreditation.

The three sub-sections of Standard Four, NEASC's standard for the assessment of student learning, that focus on addressing SLO assessment at the institution-level are as follows (from its *2011 Standards of Accreditation*, accessed 3/18/15, https://cihe.neasc.org/standard-policies/standards-accreditation/standards-effective-july-1-2011#standard_four):

> 4.48 The institution implements and provides support for systematic and broad-based assessment of what and how students are learning through their academic program and experiences outside the classroom. Assessment is based on clear statements of what students are expected to gain, achieve, demonstrate, or know by the time they complete their academic program. Assessment provides useful information that helps the institution to improve the experiences provided for students, as well as to assure that the level of student achievement is appropriate for the degree awarded.
> 4.49 The institution's approach to understanding student learning focuses on the course, program, and institutional level. Evidence is considered at the appropriate level of focus, with the results being a demonstrable factor in improving the learning opportunities and results for students.
> 4.54 The institution uses a variety of quantitative and qualitative methods and direct and indirect measures to understand the experiences and learning outcomes

> of its students, and includes external perspectives. The institution devotes appropriate attention to ensuring that its methods of understanding student learning are trustworthy and provide information useful in the continuing improvement of programs and services for students.

Wading Slowly Into the CLA

In terms of SLO assessment and Carlow, a senior-level administrator who played a critical role in introducing the CLA to the institution said administrators had felt the external pressures for institutions to assess more "…for a long time. Every since I came to university [late 1990s], this has been a bit of a topic. There's always been something of the feeling that we're working at it. We always want more. This [getting involved in the CIC/CLA Consortium] seemed like it might be something that would get us to actually take a significant next step. I'm speaking for [the former CAO who introduced the CLA to Carlow]—he really is the one that pushed it. I think he was right. It does do that." From my discussions with faculty and administrators who were involved with the CLA when it first came to campus, it emerged that this former CAO wanted to promote a "culture of assessment" on campus and he thought that the CLA, which was gaining some traction nationally as an assessment tool, could assist in that.

Prefacing the institution's involvement in the CLA was the submission of its five-year interim report to NEASC in 2009. As a result of this self-study, the institution realized that

> …assessment at the University is broad-based and effective in our professional programs, in compliance with requirements of professional accreditation. We also found that our liberal arts programs treat learning outcomes in almost exclusively qualitative terms. We learned that some programs have not published their learning outcomes online or in the University catalog. In response to this internal analysis, we have begun a process that will lead to the development of published learning outcomes for each academic program at the University (from a 2009 proposal the University of Carlow submitted to CIC for why they wanted to participate in the CIC/CLA Consortium).

Additionally, as part of this self-study, the institution examined its assessment practices in its Core Curriculum and thought that because the curriculum has a First Year Seminar and a Senior Capstone Seminar, these would be ideal places to implement the CLA. The proposal, submitted by senior-level administrators, indicated that the institution would use CLA results to "improve the effectiveness of these courses and also to rethink the sequences and offerings of the core curriculum."

Joining the CIC/CLA Consortium in 2010, according to a senior-level administrator, (1) served as an impetus to shape their conversations and debates about SLO and SLO assessment, (2) helped administrators (such as herself) identify and groom potential new faculty leaders on campus, and (3) challenged faculty to think about new and better approaches to student learning. The consortium also provided a means, she continued, to be involved with other peer institutions that were engaged in the same endeavor and were in various stages of SLO and value-added assessment. Also, there was appeal in that the Consortium was receiving some funding by the highly reputable Carnegie Corporation.

Administrators Use Assessment Messaging to Persuade

As something introduced by senior-level administrators, the CAO's office made sure to message the CLA initially to faculty as an interesting thing to explore, as a way to obtain some quantitative data, and that it was going to impact a small sample of students (n=100). According to Olivia, a professor involved in the CLA from the outset, "It was perceived as only involving a few students, so it wasn't going to impinge on anyone's territory, that it was voluntary, that we could adopt different things from it or not. And so it didn't stir up any controversy." Senior-level administrators involved in the CLA also

had a plan to identify senior faculty who they knew might be interested in SLO assessment, and identify newer faculty who they believed might be strong candidates for grooming into faculty leadership positions.

Administrators see their role as more as presenting the big picture for faculty, said Hannah, a senior-level administrator:

> A good academic administrator knows and recognizes faculty prerogative in…at least for academic administrators, I believe [faculty are] best served by somebody who holds faculty appointment, which I do. And so knows the game, and knows the rules of it, and honors the prerogatives and obligations that attend to it, but also knows that there are other things that need to happen, and so brings certain skills set with that. And it's as mundane as making sure that there aren't two classes scheduled in the same room at the same time. But on many and higher order types of things: budget, budget maintenance, proposing programs, seeking to ensure that some conversations in the sort you're interesting in—learning outcomes—that somebody is promoting that and is responsible to promote that because faculty members will do that in their own classes but it needs to be done at higher and higher levels and perspectives that are more integrative. And somebody needs to be responsible to make sure that's happening.

Therefore, administrator involvement in assessment has been more about finding ways to bring the conversation to the fore rather than dictating the conversation.

Conversations with administrators and faculty show that they are fully aware that the juggernaut of assessment in higher education means that Carlow has to embrace it in some form. On one level, it *has* to happen. Said a professor, "But they [some resistant faculty] are going to go along with it because it's just going to happen. The CAO wants it. It's in the general culture out there in education for higher ed. So it's going to happen. It's inevitable." One faculty member said, "I think the political structure is such that we will be required to demonstrate accountability. And we're being told that [by the administration]." And said Hannah,

> We can find people who will absent themselves [from assessment], but they'll absent themselves and peril their ability, I believe, to help us to discern where

> we're going to be moving. Because with assessment as a way in which we will be increasingly moving, we will. That's settled and over with. There's no question about it…. It's settled…by academia as a whole, which is us. So we have settled it, so we're not going to debate that. We're going to debate *how*, not whether.

So where faculty power resides is not in the choice to say whether SLO assessment is going to happen or not, but the form in which it is going to happen. To start the institution on this road, the former CAO looked at and introduced the CLA to faculty. But that does not mean that the CLA *has* to be the SLO assessment. Which assessment to use is faculty choice. Hannah explained it this way:

> And so next is to say there isn't one way to do that [assessment]. There are many. So the reason to participate is to discern and help us define which way. And distinguishing it from administration. The administration does the accounting at the university—it's not a governance issue…. But governance, shared governance, is saying oh, here is how we will define assessment, here are the practices, here are the reports that will be requested. And that's done through faculty groups… Those entities are where that faculty power resides. And that is a significant power.

This upfront acknowledgement that *how* to implement assessment is in the hands of faculty might have been why I didn't hear too much from faculty that assessment would negatively impact their autonomy as professors. Said a faculty member, "I don't think it's going to negatively impact our autonomy too much, because *how* we get there is still going to be up to us. So it's just going to add a dimension that we didn't have, that we should have had all along."

At Carlow, because administrators seem to prefer to operate by persuasion rather than mandate, they are trying to harness senior faculty leaders and cultivate newer faculty leaders to try and get undergraduate faculty to embrace assessment. Said a senior-level administrator,

> If you're talking about assessment that puts strain on faculty and administration, you'd use a pile of money to hire more faculty and more administrators. Problem

> solved. But what do you do when there is no pile of money? You have to do it by persuasion. You have to do it by a belief that it means something. Professionals, unless they're so overworked they can't find an additional minute, but most people aren't. It's a 9-month contract. It's a heavy teaching load with a lot of students, but there's still…it's a four-day week, a fifth day reserved for research. There are opportunities there, that if they feel something is meaningful, they can find the time. Even with our constrained circumstances. So the key for us, since we don't have the pile of money to do it with, is to put it forward in a way that shows people it's meaningful, it will help them be better teachers, it will help us develop better curriculum, it will help us engage our students, it will help us better understand student needs, characters.

And herein lies the core message of the aim of assessment that administrators are trying to convey to faculty: that assessment is for the improvement of teaching and learning. While acknowledging that assessment needs to occur because NEASC requires it, administrators understand that in order to make assessment meaningful, and not just a reporting requirement, they need to transform it into something that faculty can use. Said a senior-level administrator,

> I try to tell people when you think about NEASC, do not think about an entity telling you what to do. It's you. It's us. We, the body of academia, is what's created these requirements. The philosopher Emmanuel Kant, has this idea of heteronomy—listening to what other authorities tell you what to do. And then there's the concept of autonomy—which is to know that the requirement comes from you yourself. That's what you do. That's the kind of modern outlook. That's the professional outlook. Professionals don't do what others tell them to do. Professionals norm themselves. An accreditation entity is a gathering of professional minds creating these reflective points. They come from us. They're not imposed on us. Accreditation focus on outcomes is because we academicians collectively thought so. So that's the way in which NEASC, in my mind, is introduced into the conversation. Or any accreditor, or professional accreditor.

This is an important point because this administrator is trying to emphasize to faculty that this is *not* administrative intrusion into faculty jurisdiction, but rather the profession self-regulating.

There was no sense at all from any of the interviewees that senior administrators were wielding a heavy-hand on assessment. Discussions and any action on SLO and

assessment occurs primarily through the Deans of the individual schools and colleges with their faculty and program directors, encouraged by the Office of the Provost.

> Senior-level administrator: The Dean's responsibility or primary power is saying what you're going to talk about in a meeting: We're going to talk about this, here's the idea, let's debate it. It's very powerful. The Provost area, we can push it as a topic for Deans to engage people with by a memo to the Dean asking for the outcome of the conversations. And it gets down. That's the way we do it. It's not done in a kind of an autocratic way, because it's always about the conversation.

I really got the sense from my interviews that senior-level administrators approach assessment as a joint endeavor of administration and faculty. A faculty member confirmed this: "And certainly the Deans are bringing it up. And the Deans are saying 'Let's make sure that you have outcomes for your program. Let's make sure you have them for each course that you teach. Let's make sure that they are connected." And Deans are having these discussions, sometimes followed up by asking faculty to take concrete steps. According to a faculty member in Arts and Sciences, her Dean said to faculty at the beginning of the 2013-2014 academic year: "I'm going to ask you this semester for all of your SLOs for all of your courses."

This particular faculty member makes an important point about the important role of Deans in the day-to-day running of the institution. In fact, senior administrators mentioned that they reach out to faculty by going through the Deans. A senior-level administrator explained that conversations about SLO assessment, incorporating SLOs more deliberately into a course or programs, are done through the Deans, but with a push from the CAO's office. The Deans are the primary figures or change agents, if you will, through which initiatives either get implemented or do not. They are the ones in regular contact with their faculty and translate communiqués from senior administration. According to an article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* entitled, "To Change a

Campus, Talk to the Dean," academic deans "are the ones top administrators rely on to push schools and colleges to evolve" (June 2014). And the impression I received from faculty interviews is that this process works for them. Said a faculty member, "[Faculty] are so involved in their day-to-day work that they allow the bureaucratic model to work." They seem to have trusting relationships with their deans.

Tina described her dean as critical in shaping faculty interactions amongst their colleagues and to the running of the school: "Dean [NAME]. He's a really important element, I think, to the department working so well too. He's very, very ,very active as Dean. I've never really seen anything like it before. He teaches, he's involved with undergrads, he's played a big role in developing programs and doing a lot of things." The Dean-Faculty working relationship in this school is described by the faculty as collegial. A faculty member depicted her dean this way: "*Very* accessible to students, faculty, and anyone else. And also he's very…he has his ideas of how things work, but he's very receptive. And I've even…you can tell sometimes that he's even, he's convinced by argument sometimes. And will accommodate. Will even change his point of view, which is kind of nice. I'm used to a lot more hierarchical relations with Deans."

In addition to participating in the Consortium, the institution worked to familiarize faculty in a more direct way with the CLA *before* the CLA was implemented. A senior administrator invited a team of three faculty members to a CLA in the Classroom Performance Task Academy hosted by the developers of the CLA so that the faculty could get some familiarity with the assessment tool and learn to create performance tasks in their own courses. An incentive provided to faculty for their participation was that those who took part in the training could put it in their tenure

review, as something they did with their colleagues and for the University. While the CLA in the Classroom training provided an opportunity for a small handful of faculty to learn more about the CLA, it was also an opportunity for senior administrators to obtain faculty feedback on the CLA itself (the response from the faculty who attended was positive). A second team from Carlow attended in January 2013.

The adoption and implementation of the CLA at the institution was not a topic that was discussed in FA, nor was it something that required a faculty vote. It was adopted and implemented through the CAO's office.

Faculty Response to the CLA

According to a faculty representative, involved with the CLA from the beginning, faculty initially thought the CLA was interesting:

> I'd say it was framed as something that we're doing in response to the increasing demands for accountability and the increasing desire for people to look at how students learn through our programs. And nobody's feathers got ruffled and it didn't seem to stir any controversy. And I think that's because people weren't asked to really do anything with it unless they wanted to. It was voluntary. And then all of the new faculty, they're interested in it because, well, it's another thing they can write on their tenure-review stuff. It gives them stuff to do with their colleagues and the University.

One of her colleagues concurred, citing that because of the measured way in which the CLA was introduced, with involvement from the faculty sought from the beginning, "We don't really see a lot of resistance to it…. I think that generally the vibe that I get from most people is: assessing is good as long as it's not becoming the sole focus of what we do." The core group of faculty who undertook the CLA in the Classroom training showed their colleagues why something like the CLA was meaningful. According to a senior-level administrator, they communicated that "it will help them be better teachers, it will

help us develop better curriculum, it will help us engaged our students, it will help us better understand student needs, characters."

Faculty resistance, as far as I could discern from my interviews with faculty and administrators, was more philosophical than based on any concrete actions faculty had taken, and might be more accurately described as "faculty concerns." When asked to consider what might cause faculty to resist assessment, faculty brought up some of their colleagues' concerns about assessment's impact on professionalism—that assessment might be applied in a negative manner toward faculty (such as in promotion and tenure review), or that assessment, or the imposition thereof, challenges a professor's authority.

With the former, there were no indications from administrators and faculty on the Promotion and Tenure Committee that this was being considered. A faculty member had this to say,

> Sometimes you get generalized fears of assessment like, "Oh, this is a measure that they'll use to deny me tenure." Or, "We're just going to be teaching to some standardized test," or something like that. It's fairly modest in terms of the kinds of assessment vehicles that we're using. Cause it's really…we're really talking about CLA in the First Year Seminar and then in the Capstone, which, these are purely Gen Ed classes so they don't really impact what faculty are doing too much.

A junior faculty member thought that perhaps in colleagues who articulated the concern about assessment negatively impacting professionalism, it was because in academia, "we're very averse to authority. And also movements towards standardizing what happens in our classrooms. There is a legitimate concern behind that because teaching is so personal." She elaborated by saying, "There's also a feeling of lost autonomy…. I do think there's this sort of sense of loss of, yeah, a top-down, uniform requirement that is taking away my independence, taking away my freedom…just sort of

a ‘damn the man’ type thing.” However, she couldn’t provide specific examples of where and how exactly faculty were experiencing the lost autonomy.

One senior faculty member considered that the academic freedom argument faculty put forth to resist SLO assessment indicates something deeper:

> Well, they will go immediately to things like academic freedom, which is a very different thing. But they’ll want to go into something like this “academic freedom means that you can’t make me do that.” Well…not really [laughs]. Not really. But they will go for things like that. When they say something like that, I know it’s heartfelt. I know, then, that what you’re really saying is you’re into an area that they feel uncomfortable, you know, working with this concept.

Another faculty member challenged her colleagues’ academic freedom argument thusly: “Some of us over-use the academic freedom argument, sometimes…. I was like this really has nothing to do with academic freedom [laughs]. It’s unique…academic is a unique beast because there’s so much aversion to people just determining whether you’re doing your job well. And also, just like how can you improve what you’re doing…. It’s [academic freedom argument] like a shield that you raise…. But I don’t feel like it’s an academic freedom issue for them to ask ‘Does using this textbook help you to achieve course objectives?’ I feel like that’s a reasonable question.”

In an environment where teaching is the primary role of the professor, many of the faculty I interviewed readily articulated that the aim of assessment goes beyond just accountability and is to improve teaching and learning. Said Tina, “Oh, practically how do we take this information and then what do we do with it? One thing is we would adapt the curriculum of certain requirements.” Grant, an older faculty member, said, “I think if it’s done well, it can help those of us who teach to have a better sense of the kinds of students we have, what their problems are, what their strengths are, and we can fine tune our teaching so we can hit those weaknesses so that they’re not so weak anymore and

help them develop their strengths even better. ” Said another senior faculty member, “[assessment’s] improving what we do for students.” Added another professor, “I think partially to demonstrate accountability. I think partially to see where we are weak and can grow, especially in the area of Gen Ed…. And to improve our Gen Ed program. And hopefully to improve all of our programs actually.”

Those who viewed assessment in a favorable to neutral light, tended to do so because they considered assessment as an integral part of one’s identity as a professor, in some way essential to the very enterprise of being a professor. One professor, who had been at Carlow for just over a year, proffered that assessment can be viewed as a form of research, a form or way of doing research in many ways on oneself to do that continuous improvement process. “Where teaching is scholarship and scholarship is teaching,” she said. Rather than perceive assessment as something outside of the profession, such faculty perceived assessment as integrated into the profession. Another faculty member said “…it just makes sense…. and we have to be accountable for what the outcomes are. We can’t keep doing it and hope that people will keep flocking to us. We have to demonstrate how that individual is learning and changing, otherwise people are *not* going to keep flocking to us.”

But just as there are individuals who see assessment as a natural part of the job, there are those who do not consider it part of the job. As a faculty representative said, “And then there are some people that really don’t see it as a faculty role, that their job is to teach in their discipline. Their job is to develop knowledge in their discipline. And measuring outcomes, especially around Gen Ed outcomes, that isn’t their role. They’re not teachers of writing. They’re not teachers of math. They’re teachers of their discipline

so they don't really see any other role other than the certain standards in their discipline." While none of the faculty I interviewed held this viewpoint, I did gather a couple of names of faculty who individuals suggested might be able to best represent this viewpoint; they declined to participate in my study.

Assessment is for the Young

An emergent theme from Carlow, which is consistent with what faculty in other institutions said, is that newer faculty seemed more willing to accept and take on assessment responsibilities than older, more established faculty at the institution. Faculty who are newer to the professorial role are depicted as more open and willing to embrace SLO and assessment into their role. Here are what some of the relatively newer faculty said to me about the newer/older faculty divide:

> Gerald: [There seems to be a] distinct personality between the newer faculty and the older faculty….this is pretty standard stuff—but it's so glaring. The newer faculty are the faculty who are willing and excited about trying new things and working with the students in the classroom, and doing things like assessment.
>
> Laurie: Since I am kind of new to everything and my graduate training is recent, we've always been focused on assessment. So it's always been something I've thought about.
>
> Tina: Should we have a standard requirement that people have objectives in their syllabi? And this is surprising to me as a new faculty member. I was like "Do they *need* to require that??" And apparently maybe they do need to. And I was like "Oh, that's very disappointing."

A senior-level administrator also observed this difference in response:

> People that are newer to this, newer to full-time appointments, know assessment. They know what it means, they know how to do it, and they want to do it. Or, they can be encouraged. The generations that have been around, that pre-exist that, they're harder to get there. Speaking in general, you can find some very senior people who are right with it, but more who aren't. So if you're talking about overlapping distributions, the newer folks are at it. The Committee on General Education, the Deans put forward people who are newer at this and so that's why this assessment thing was easier for them to get.

As did Olivia:

> I think for some, especially the new faculty, it's the way that it's always been. Because they're new and that's sort of how it always is for them. So that's good; that's the environment they're coming into, and it makes total sense to them. It does. They are so close to having just attended college themselves and graduate school that it only makes sense that we have to be accountable. They're embracing it.

And what do more senior faculty that I interviewed have to say? Sam, a tenured faculty member who is actually a proponent of the CLA, described his older colleagues thusly: "…we're still trying to cling to old forms…. Assessment is not natural for faculty…. And that it's hard to find reasons to embrace this new concept…. There are old-timers here who are not very open to the idea" of accountability in terms of assessing. One faculty representative shared with me her (older) colleague's opinion of SLO assessment and the CLA: "The older generation is more likely to regard this as an intrusion. And I think that's because assessment methods were generally pretty vague and pretty obscure and assessment was sort of seen as a nuisance, it's a paperwork thing, it doesn't really have a place here. I think nowadays, younger people coming out of college more recently are more familiar with this idea of someone who's got a degree and it's worthless, they actually don't have a saleable skill, they don't have something they can do, they aren't competitive for graduate school."

A different take on the difference in response of newer faculty compared to more established faculty addresses the concept of power. Claire, who had been at the institution for over 25 years said that not too many of the younger faculty would protest if senior administration said they would have to do assessment, "probably because they don't feel as comfortable in their position," whereas older faculty might feel more comfortable

voicing dissent. That is, the more senior faculty, particularly if one is tenured, can vocalize resistance because they are more secure in their role and position in the institution; they are less concerned with projecting collegiality with their peers, with the administration—categories for tenure evaluation.

We have a Ways to Go

There is the sense among some faculty and definitely among the administrators, that the institution is slower than some of its peer institutions in adopting and integrating SLO assessment. Said a faculty representative, "I'm guessing that a lot of institutions are way ahead of us [in the development of institution-wide SLOs and ways to assess them]…. I sense that because when I talk to faculty from other institutions, they seem to have these systems in place more and they seem to have already had to do what we're being asked to do now. And not that other people have the CLA, because they don't. But they just seem to have it more together in terms of outcomes." As I mentioned earlier, the University of Carlow is the least "mature" of my five institutions in terms of developing SLO, integrating SLO assessment and the CLA, and engaging in these conversations with faculty. But that is understandable given that it is also the one (amongst the five) with its reaccreditation in the future and not in the past. A senior-level administrator said, "The place we're at now is we are still taking steps to where we need to be, to be candid with you. It's like even having the conversation, it takes cultivating to have a meaningful conversation about it. So we're doing that. We need to get father along with it."

At the time of my interviews, senior leadership indicated there were no concrete plans to systematize or formalize assessment across the institution, but some small measures were being taken that showed an increasing commitment by the institution to

SLO and SLO assessment. For example, as part of the General Education curriculum revision, the next steps will include outcomes assessment as part of the planning and practice—embedding assessment into the process. As such, a role for a Compliance Officer and Assessment Officer has been written in. Also, the university has moved to dedicate most of the main library's fifth floor (about 9,000 square feet) to learning support of various kinds: Academic Resource Center, Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, Student Support Services center, dedicated classrooms for instruction and enhanced support. These structural supports for assessments sound like the very beginnings toward building a "culture of assessment," that we saw at Stamper College and Grant State University.

Conclusion to Chapter V

In Chapter V, I presented two institutions—Redeemer College and the University of Carlow. As at Stamper College and Grant State University, administrators at Redeemer and Carlow introduced the CLA to faculty influenced by the need to include SLO assessments for upcoming accreditation visits, and prompted by a search to find an assessment to measure general education learning outcomes. However, the difference with these two institutions is that administrators leaned more toward a bottom-up, "discovery" approach with their faculty in order to secure faculty support and buy-in.

At Redeemer College, this approach was guided by a religious worldview that has shaped institutional culture and governance to create a collegial organization that favors professional authority over administrative authority, especially over academic matters. For Redeemer faculty, discussion and debate are considered a faculty member's professional duty, and part of their professorial identity. So while SLO and SLO assessment were something that had to be done in order to address the regional accreditor, faculty worked through their discovery process of discussion, debate, and airing of concerns to come to an understanding of why assessment was important and how faculty could integrate it into the curriculum in a meaningful way. While the CAO brought the CLA to the General Education Committee's attention, she left it to this faculty-run committee to determine if it would be the right fit for Redeemer. Jurisdiction of assessment is with the faculty.

In the University of Carlow, we see an institution preparing for its upcoming reaccreditation in a similar manner to most of the institutions in my study: revising its General Education curriculum, establishing institution-wide SLO and SLO assessment,

gently and slowly introducing it and the CLA to faculty, and grappling with how best to secure faculty support of it. While faculty described the institution overall as bureaucratic, administrators and faculty alike did describe their relationships with one another as collegial, and described a more informal working relationship with administrators applying a light hand in academic matters. Because the University of Carlow is the "youngest" of the five institutions in my study in terms of addressing assessment issues and assessment activity, overall faculty response to SLO assessment and the CLA at Carlow is "emergent." That is, beyond a small core of faculty members that administrators have recruited and are grooming to be leaders on assessment, overall the faculty seem to have more of a neutral/passive stance on it. This is mainly because SLO assessment and the CLA have not really impacted their roles on campus. And as a relatively newcomer to SLO assessment, the University of Carlow doesn't yet have in place structural supports to connect assessment concretely to faculty work in the teaching and learning sphere. Jurisdiction of assessment is in the process of negotiation.

In the following chapter, Chapter VI, I will present the findings from my fifth institution, Morrisville University.

CHAPTER VI

MORRISVILLE UNIVERSITY: WIELDING THE CLA TO ASSERT PROFESSIONAL AUTHORITY AND IDENTITY

Introduction

Morrisville University is a small, private institution intimately situated in the downtown area of a southern city. The campus is located in a leafy neighborhood of historic, renovated Victorian-era homes, yet skyscrapers are just a few blocks away. The University's Central Building, where administration offices are located, was once used as a military hospital during the Civil War, and is currently the battleground for a different kind of fight. The institution draws most of its students from the metropolitan area and the eastern part of the state. In fall 2013, 91 percent of those who applied were admitted, while 33 percent of those admitted enrolled (NCES, fall 2013). That brings the total number of undergraduate students to just over 1,000, about a 45 percent increase in undergraduate enrollment from fall 2009. Seventy-two percent of undergraduates receive Pell Grants. The three largest programs, according to bachelor's awards conferred (2012-2013) are in Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services, Psychology, and Liberal Arts and Science, General Studies and Humanities (NCES, fall 2013).

Morrisville University stands out from the other four case studies in that it is the only instance where a faculty leader introduced the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) to faculty. Because this faculty leader was a trusted colleague and he endorsed the CLA, faculty supported the use of the CLA on campus. A few years after the institution started using the CLA, Morrisville's financial crisis brought it close to extinction, and a

new administration swept in, ushering in radical and rapid changes over a three-year period that left the faculty ranks significantly reduced and the remaining faculty disempowered and demoralized. Faculty's past experiences with, and expectations of, a collegial organization operating under shared governance were swept aside as the new leadership, guided by a corporate model of organization, acted authoritatively with Board support and with little to no consultation with faculty, even in academic matters. When leadership wanted to discontinue the use of the CLA, citing cost as the reason, and implement e-portfolio instead, the faculty stood their ground and fought to keep it because they had lost so much control in other areas. They wielded the CLA, maintaining that SLO assessment was faculty jurisdiction, to try and stem the erosion of their professional authority and professorial identity.

In this chapter, I begin with how drastically the institution in which the faculty worked altered—from its mission, to its governance (and their role in it), to its faculty size—and how these changes diminished their role significantly in the institution. Then I explore the character of the faculty members who have remained—their commitment to teaching and to their students, and the hopes they hold out that they and even the institution might "survive" the administration. While it might seem assessment is such a small part of their story, it is to some, one of the things they hold on to as part of their professorial identity.

Background

Morrisville University is an institution that epitomizes several of the dramatic economic challenges that have rocked many small, private, tuition-dependent colleges and universities since the 2008 recession: low enrollment numbers, programs with too

few students, students (and parents) wanting programs that will ensure jobs after graduation, and competing with public and for-profit institutions for students, to name a few. By 2010, this was an institution in fiscal crisis. I chose it for my study because it provided an opportunity to witness the kinds of challenges and changes that the professorial profession faces, particularly faculty in these institutions; I chose it because the faculty was in a power struggle with senior-level administrators, they were fighting to preserve a professional authority that was being diminished; and I chose it because more so than all my other institutions, these faculty needed and wanted to be heard.

Fighting to Survive

The Board of Trustees' response to Morrisville's fiscal crisis was immediate. In trying to re-image itself, to make itself relevant as a modern higher education institution, the Board brought in a new president in summer 2010 charged with turning the institution around. According to accounts in *The Morrisville Times*[24] covering the new president's hiring, the Board selected this president precisely because of his reputation as a "change agent," and a relatively successful one based on results at his previous institution. Thus, according to a senior-level administrator, the Board gave the president wide latitude to make decisions, and make them quickly. In the face of protests (of which there would be many) from alumni, students, and faculty, the Board always supported the president. In just under three years, the institution changed the mission statement, offered evening and online courses, eliminated majors and departments, cut full-time faculty positions in half, and supplemented the loss in faculty with a hiring surge of adjuncts. In some institutions, one or two of these changes would have taken a lot of discussion and some time to

[24] *The Morrisville Times* is a pseudonym for the region's major newspaper.

consider, map out, and implement, but all of this had occurred by the time I visited in fall 2013.[25] According to a senior-level administrator, the Board wanted a "change agent," and they got change.

But as painful as these changes were (and they were going to continue), they were necessary for the institution to survive and emerge in a new form, according to a senior-level administrator. As this administrator said, "In the models we have created at these CIC [Council of Independent Colleges] institutions, we will not survive. We've got to do something different. And we know that…." This senior-level administrator had not been at Morrisville University for very long, and his previous position had also been at a CIC institution. He continued to tell me why he decided to join the administration at Morrisville: "When I looked at Morrisville University [for the position]…they're doing that now. They're deciding we're either going to survive or we're going to close. And that's the school I wanted to come and be a part of this change." He considered the prospect of joining an institution at the cusp of surviving or failing to be too challenging and interesting to turn down.

While the institution continues to be rooted in the liberal arts tradition, the new mission statement of 2011 states that the university prepares students for careers in tomorrow's organizations. This reflects the institution's primary focus on setting its students onto a career path and securing jobs after graduation. The institution's website touts its job placement and graduate school rate (more than 90 percent) and that academic internships in the area of study are required. Leadership leans, said a senior-level administrator, on student and market needs to drive the institution's direction and growth.

[25] In order to preserve the institution's identity, I have only disclosed a few of those changes.

Governance

Clashing Cognitive Frameworks in a Corporate Institution

Senior leadership believes, a senior-level administrator told me, the institution needs to adopt a corporate culture not only to weather the financial challenges but also to transform into a new form if it is to survive as a 21st century institution. He continued to describe the necessity for this market-oriented perspective, "higher education needs to operate more like a business…[we have to] become more efficient and effective at what we [do]." The adoption of this organizational model is unsurprising given that the president has a bachelor's degree in business administration, an MBA, and began his professional career in the private sector. In my conversations with senior administrators, I found that they were united in their corporate model, market-oriented perspective of the institution. A senior administrator delineated how this orientation is markedly different from the faculty perspective of the institution:

> …faculty come out of the PhD program where you have to do all this research that does take lots of time, then you have to go and get literature review on what everybody else said about it, and then you write your position on it and defend it, and all of that is very process-oriented. It's very lengthy. You don't make a decision without all the information. Well, that's not how a market economy works. A market economy works much faster. It works sometimes when you don't have all the information, but you have to take risks because if you don't take any risk, you don't ever get on track with anything. All of that, I think, is so opposite of how faculty were trained.

For this administrator, being "collegial" and running an institution via "shared governance" is a "romantic luxury" that not all higher education institutions can have: "And PhDs come out of either state-funded schools or very wealthy schools. And so the thought of any change in those schools of any rapidity [laughs]…those schools can afford to stay collegial and reflective and producing thought." He continued by saying that he

believes in "shared *academic* governance where it can be done," but at the same time, even that requires the luxury of time to consider and to debate programmatic decisions, time that he suggested Morrisville does not have. This administrator gave me the sense in our conversation that he felt unwilling to be constrained by shared governance because he felt pressure to be able to make decisions quickly, to be agile and nimble: "We've got to move quickly. I think we have to operate more like a business so that we can be more effective in the marketplace." And the tone of our conversation seemed to suggest that this administrator didn't see faculty as colleagues or as active participants in the governing of the institution, but as employees with limited say in the organization.

In the corporate mode, when a new leader comes into power, some immediate staff changes occur. When the new president began in summer 2010, all full-time faculty members were presented with letters asking them to consider buyout or early retirement packages. According to the president, this was to allow the school to have more flexibility with its resources as it looked to develop program offerings (from a fall 2010 article obtained from an online archive search of *The Morrisville Times*). A few months later, 13 faculty accepted the buyout, six professors were dismissed (including several with tenure), a few administrators also departed, and a major was dropped. This eventually dwindled the faculty ranks from nearly 50 full-time faculty members (in 2010 when the new president was selected) to a little over 20 full-time faculty in fall 2013 when I arrived on campus to conduct interviews (NCES, fall 2013).

Most faculty members[26] I interviewed concurred that the administration is "business-focused" and has adopted a corporate culture and language. Said Simon, a

[26] Because of the small number of faculty at Morrisville University and the sensitivity (and potential precariousness) of their situation, in order to do the utmost to preserve their anonymity, I have not

faculty member, "If you're a fly on the wall when faculty meet together, you hear them talk about the administration as much more business-focused than it was 15 years ago. It's all about bottom lines, it's all about revenue centers and profit centers." To illustrate, Simon offered up a scenario of a faculty member who proposes a new major program; the first question from administration would be how many students do you think it might attract. Holly (a faculty member) agreed with Simon's description. In the administration's eyes, she said, "…you're either an asset towards the future or you're a cost center, liability."

Faculty image of institutional governance, as Morrisville faculty described to me, is ideally a collegial organization where administration and faculty work together toward fulfilling the mission of the institution through shared governance. They acknowledged the seriousness of Morrisville's status—its significant financial challenges—and that difficult decisions had to be made. Knowing that, they expressed to me that they are realistic about the extent to which they can be involved in decision-making, and that their desire is not to be involved in every decision, but they would like to be included in *some* of the discussions about the future of their institution; for some, they have been a part of the institution for several decades. What is most disconcerting to faculty is that they are often not involved in the discussions nor in the decisions at the academic and curricular levels, where they typically would not only be included but would be the initiator.

This exclusion is a departure of faculty members' experiences from prior administrations. Carol, who has been teaching at Morrisville for a while,[27] said that "[t]he

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distinguished between "faculty representative" and "faculty member," and instead have referred to all faculty by "faculty member" in the text.

[27] Some faculty requested that I not indicate length of time they have served at Morrisville as that might identify them.

previous administration kind of left us more alone, to do our own thing." Recalled another long-time faculty member, "But I think that there have been, in the past, many more ways that there was a defined check and balance system that things had to go through a number of approval steps, that there was a clearer sense of the need for faculty endorsement and shaping of any sort of even moderately important decision about the curriculum." Faculty cannot discern any check and balance system in place now.

The phrase that 100% of my faculty interviewees used to describe the current governance structure was "top down." Basically the Board and president make the decisions and proceed to inform faculty and staff, is what they relayed to me. And they were mostly in agreement that there is a lack of transparency in how decisions are made at the top. One former mid-level administrator (and former faculty member), Peter, went so far as to call it a "dictatorship." Faculty sketched for me a governance system where administrative authority is the only authority and no processes are followed. Jacob, a faculty member, elaborated:

> Generally speaking, I get frustrated, I'll tell you that, with how things get done because I feel strongly about process being followed…. The processes that we've set up here aren't always followed…. I would say that we don't have, at this point, a strong governance in the sense that there's a clear process that everybody knows that this is where you start and this is what's going to happen at the end of it. Yes, that's frustrating…. Because, for instance, in two years from now, what majors are we going to have? I have no clue. Because we're getting ready to get a new round of majors. Why are we going to have that new round of majors? Well, it wasn't the result of a process. It was the result of some individuals rallying to create that. You don't have a sense of continuity from year to year in terms of where we're going and how we're growing. It does make for a kind of uncertain time.

Jacob expressed a frustration that other faculty members share—a frustration that they are in an institution in which they not only feel as if they have no input, but also feel powerless because they are unsure what the processes, if any, are anymore. A mid-level

administrator gave more shape to this frustration by explaining that the administration seems to treat "these PhDs like children" because they don't engage in dialogue with the faculty but operate by mandate. He continued,

> …but the authoritarian leadership, I don't think, works for professionals…. And for an institute of higher learning, critical thinking, that rubs the faculty the wrong way. For the general feel of the college, if you're at a place where you're supposed to be energized with ideas and thinking, that there is this overarching feeling like someone is always telling you what to do, it's not constructive.

He also spoke about administrative/authoritative authority rubbing against professional authority: "…faculty, like doctors, like engineers and any other professionals, they assume that they know what they want to do in their area of expertise, which is teaching. And for any other outside person to come in, is already difficult. But then the heavy-handedness of this particular administration makes it very contentious. I mean by nature, professionals are harder to manage. But this administration is particularly bad at it [laughs], I think." As a result, the relationship between faculty and administration is tense. When I asked Peter if faculty distrusted all the administrators, he said that administrators from the prior administration had either been demoted, pushed out, and responsibilities among remaining ones had shifted, so most of the distrust was reserved for the relatively new administrators.

A Governance Structure in Flux

Governance at the institution begins with the Board of Trustees. When the president first came on board, he requested that he meet with the Board on a monthly basis, which they did for two and a half years. The Board was heavily involved in the running of the institution, and this was because of all the changes being implemented. Explained a senior-level administrator, "When you're making changes as fast as we were,

you have to have the Board making those changes." The Board, time and time again, has stood staunchly behind the president and his decisions, however controversial. Faculty explained to me that over the three years since the president has been in office, groups including faculty have written to protest and express their concerns to the Board, but to no avail.

Directly beneath the Board are the president and President's Council. The President's Council is comprised of vice presidents who report directly to the president and meet weekly. A former mid-level administrator stated that this council is essentially made up of friends and/or former colleagues of the president that he brought with him to this institution. One faculty member was troubled by what she saw as the growth of administrators on campus: "I think one thing that's very troubling…is that there's much more administration and administrators than there are faculty at this institution, for an institution this size…. If we just look across at the number of vice presidents that we have at this institution, for an institution this size."

One of the vice presidents on the Council is the Chief Academic Officer (CAO). The CAO used to have the title of Provost, but the new president changed this in 2010. One mid-level administrator likened this to a demotion of the position, as it is now level with the other vice presidents on the President's Council: "…tells you right there that the Chief Academic Officer isn't being given higher consideration than the other VPs." This is similar to a comment that was made by a mid-level administrator at Grant State University, who was concerned that the CAO was not the Provost any longer but given the title vice president, putting him on equal footing with the other vice presidents on GSU's equivalent of the President's Council. For about six months prior to my fall 2013

campus visit, the CAO position at Morrisville had actually been vacant, so the president temporarily took on the role of CAO. The CAO presides over an Academic Council comprised of the Faculty Moderator (the faculty member elected to lead the Faculty Assembly), two Associate Deans, the past Faculty Moderator, and the Moderator-elect. Together, they set the agenda for the Faculty Assembly (FA).

My interviewees described an institution where the governance structures in place below the president and his Council, while in place, were tentative and in flux. Some committees, such as the Assessment Committee and the Teaching and Learning Committee, have stopped meeting in recent years (the individuals leading these committees had left the institution), but were in the process of being revived when I visited the campus. FA continues to meet monthly, but from my interviews with faculty, FA is virtually stripped of any influence in the governance of the institution as are the committees that function under the FA (I will discuss the FA more in the following section). As Tom, a newly-arrived senior-level administrator shared with me, what faculty told him in regards to committees is, "we're not really sure anymore how this committee functions."

The Erosion of Faculty Identity and Role and Diminishment of Faculty Power

It is faculty's opinion, stated a faculty leader, that the president quite simply does not ask for faculty input, even in the academic areas (of which I shall provide examples). Holly said, "And that's very frustrating because, as you know, that goes to morale, our identity as a faculty member and the role in the academics of the institution." A senior-level administrator said that because the president had once been a full-time faculty member for a few years a long time ago, the president felt that he had legitimate authority

to make curricular decisions, and he wielded authority in academic affairs by temporarily assuming the CAO. Here, then, is an instance of a leader traversing the administrative role and the academic role. But when senior-level administrators step out of their administrative role and insert (and in this case, co-opt) themselves into the faculty role of determining the academic side of the institution, it undermines, what Holly said, their *identity* as a faculty member.

One of the more stunning (at least stunning to the faculty) events that happened on campus was the re-writing of the academic catalog in the summer of 2012 without, as far as faculty I interviewed could tell, any faculty input. Different faculty members provided me with fairly consistent details of this event. One faculty member, Gwynn, said that "…the academic catalog was rewritten in the summer of 2012 and the Curriculum Committee returned as well as, I guess, the group of people who returned before the majority of people returned who were faculty, discovered that we had a new academic catalog that had been written for us." Gwynn noted in particular, "…some of the programs had been redefined, that significant changes had been made to them that were not overseen by the department nor by the Curriculum Committee." And as a member of the Curriculum Committee, she was in position to know whether they had been consulted or not. Another faculty member describes the president as having basically rewritten the General Education proposal as well. Additionally, a mid-level administrator recalled that the president would "look through the catalog and say, 'I don't want this course, I do want this course.' And that should have been discussed with faculty." Said another faculty member, "We lost about a third of our disciplines, departments [almost immediately when the president came on board in 2010]. But even

from there, he decided he wanted to implement a new General Education curriculum and he did that. He decided that even within majors, what size the major could be in, in some cases which courses you would offer even for disciplines outside his own [area of expertise].” This mid-level administrator recalled an “air of fear” among faculty and that is what, he surmised, made it so easy for the president to get his way.

Faculty Assembly (FA) continues to meet monthly, though one faculty member half-laughed and wondered aloud what was the point. Starting in 2011, the FA started inviting key staff members—academic staff members like Director of the Library or Career Services—to attend. While academic staff don’t have voting privileges in FA, it was important to invite them, according to a faculty member, for three reasons. First, the faculty numbers had halved, making the meetings so small and further lowering morale. Second, she said, “it was a way to get more brains in the room, more opinions, and thoughts.” And, third, it made sense from the standpoint of caring for the “total student” approach of Morrisville—where all the units at the institution work to develop and address several dimensions of the students and not just the academics.

But the purpose of FA to discuss proposals and ideas related to curriculum and other matters pertaining to faculty life is not alive and well, claimed faculty. Now, declared a faculty member, “…there is no opportunity for faculty, even through Assembly, to send forth proposals that would be considered collaboratively by the president and his Executive Council. It really is top down. And the Assembly is now an opportunity for the president to come and tell us what he would like to have happen as opposed to there be a back and forth exchange.” He continued to say that when the president is not in attendance at FA, the meetings become “group therapy… We complain

about our loss of power and identity." One can only imagine what a chilling effect the president's attendance at the meeting must have.

Unsurprisingly, faculty described their roles at the university as stripped of any influence and power. "They've been virtually stripped of their power," a former mid-level administrator and faculty member corroborated. And not just their power, but their voice. A mid-level administrator said that the faculty feel like "no one's hearing what they're saying." The general consensus among the faculty I interviewed is that the FA has little influence over events and decisions happening at the institution. Here is an exchange between Carol, a faculty member, and me on the topic of faculty influence on university-wide decisions:

> Carol: On curricular issues, I would say moderate. On other things, not a lot—I wouldn't say that we are zero, but…
>
> Me: To focus in on the curricular issues, why moderate?
>
> Carol: There are other groups, like the administration, who can propose different changes. Ultimately we vote on it, but it's not like we're the only place where curricular changes occur. We ultimately vote on them but we're not the only starting point. There are other constituencies who have impact on that.
>
> Me: Is there ever a sense among faculty that they are being leaned on heavily to vote a certain way?
>
> Carol: I would prefer not to answer that [partial laugh].

Jacob, a faculty member, shared his view on what happens in FA: "Well, what happens a lot of times is we will make a decision about something, but it may be changed later. Or, we are presented with a change to vote on without feeling like there's much other option other than to vote it in favor. It doesn't *feel* like a very powerful Faculty Assembly." Jacob answered my question; the one that Carol preferred not to answer.

Committee structure, too, at the moment seems in disarray. For example, Curriculum Committee, traditionally known as one of the more powerful committees had

no input on the re-writing of the academic catalog. While there is a faculty-led Curriculum Committee, according to a faculty member, this is just a "rubber stamp: 'Yes, Mister President, what would you like?' " "Well," said Gwynn, who has been teaching at the institution over 15 years, "committee structures, at one time, seemed to have more final…that the structure of a committee and its work appeared to have more influence in the final product than I believe many people feel is the case now."

When the new president arrived and started to sit in on FA, faculty resorted to underground tactics. There "were these more secret meetings and emails that were through gmail accounts or whatever. It became more secretive, and off-campus meetings and things like that," divulged a former faculty member. And the reason for having these informal faculty meetings off-campus, said one professor, was "so we can feel like we are speaking more freely." These shadow meetings were convened, in effect, so that faculty could have open discussions about their concerns over governance because faculty did not feel comfortable airing them in FA, because said a former faculty member, "you couldn't do that because it was viewed as a threat to the administration." And faculty feared voicing dissent might make them a target for dismissal.

The Faculty

I interviewed a total of seven faculty (out of more than 20 full-time in fall 2013) and one former mid-level administrator who had held a faculty position before taking on an administrative role. Because of the climate into which I entered, I was surprised on one level with my participants' frankness. Sometimes I sensed a relief that they had the opportunity to voice their experiences to a third, neutral party within the framework of helping my study. But some spoke cautiously and obliquely when the response to the

question might not reflect favorably on the administration. Two faculty members declined to have their interviews recorded, and one faculty member requested that we meet off-campus. I also met with a mid-level administrator off-campus who was willing to speak off the record and provide me with additional context of the faculty-administration dynamics at Morrisville.

The Teaching Ethos

As a teaching institution first and foremost, the professoriate at Morrisville identified teaching as their primary responsibility and described a sort of teaching ethos. Faculty's descriptions of teaching are broad and extend from the classroom to include mentoring, advising, attending students' sporting events, and being a friend to students. In this respect, as one professor said, there is a "missionary" aspect of the job: "At Morrisville, it's very much been part of the job to meet with students, to talk to them, interact with them." Being a professor at Morrisville means that one accepts that teaching a student might stretch beyond interaction in a single course to multiple courses over several years.

> Carol: I think what would distinguish us, at least definitely from larger schools, would be that we view ourselves much more as mentors. Most of my students I see in multiple classes. I have the opportunity to see how they progress over time. And when we think about our curriculum, we really spend time thinking about what should we be doing at each level? What's appropriate developmentally? How are we moving them across? Our goals for them educationally. But because we are small and we do develop relationships with students, I think we really see ourselves as having the opportunity to mentor students.

And if a new faculty member joins Morrisville not able to commit to developing relationships with the students—a critical aspect of the professorial role here—then that new faculty member is not going to succeed here, said a senior faculty member.

And in spite of the current tensions with administration and anxieties about job security, the faculty continued to express their commitment and dedication to their work with students. A senior-level administrator commented that even though faculty are upset, "I haven't seen the faculty here not do their job. They still do what they need to do and they engage the student and they do a good job in the classroom. I have seen other schools where that doesn't happen—when the faculty get peeved at something with the administration, they kind of do a slowdown, like a strike, a work slowdown. That hasn't happened here." What continues to drive the faculty, said a faculty member, is that they are "Very much focused on what's good for the student. It's always the deciding factor, it seems." Holly commented that this commitment doesn't flag because it goes to the heart of who they are as professors: "I really think it comes down to the profession. We are dedicated to teaching and learning. We want to improve as a profession, as a professional. We want things to be better for our students and our institution and our community. So I think collectively we see that as a common denominator within the faculty role and responsibility." She represented this teaching ethos in the following exchange:

> Me: Why do you think that faculty do continue to, as you know, be so involved and active [in the face of feeling beaten down by administration time and time again]?
>
> Holly: I really think it comes down to the profession. We are dedicated to teaching and learning. We want to improve as a profession, as a professional. We want things to be better for our students and our institution and our community. So I think collectively we see that as a common denominator within the faculty role and responsibility. The clash or the conflict is fairly a natural one…. We want to be part of the solution. We don't want to be seen as the problem. The faculty very much want to be part of that. We want the institution to do well. We want our communities to do well. We want our students to do well. So I think collectively, as a professional faculty member, that's something that we strive towards. That's why we want to work with the administrators.

Holly articulates the institution-service orientation that appeared in faculty throughout the other institutions. Despite the challenges she and her colleagues have been through, they continue to want the best for the institution.

This commitment to students is such that faculty are willing to give up some of their teaching autonomy if they believe it will help their students. A senior-level administrator, Tom, provided me with a specific example of how the faculty are willing to make compromises as professors in consideration of *who* their students are. At Morrisville, 72% of undergraduates receive Pell grants (NCES, fall 2013), so the faculty are aware that a lot of students don't buy textbooks for courses and try to get through the semester without them.

> Tom: And our faculty recognize…They're very concerned about it and trying to figure it out. We know that Follett [educational publisher] now has a program that they've tried with a few schools that will package your books for one set price, so you can build it into your tuition if you wish or whatever. But the trick is, the faculty have to commit to that textbook for either two or three years. Well, I can tell you at the last place [where I worked], faculty would be like, "Heck, no!" Our faculty, I think, are going to go for it and give up that freedom to freely change from semester to semester to say, "I'll commit for two years if it will help out students." That's big!

Again, this small example illustrates that faculty are willing to give up some of their autonomy (e.g., textbook selection), if that will help their students.

What concerned one senior faculty member is that the current environment has eroded some of this teaching ethos, in that it has become a place where faculty are no longer interested in staying any longer in the day than is absolutely necessary, he noticed this particularly among the newer colleagues who "draw the boundaries much more carefully than maybe some of the more senior colleagues do." Other faculty members did not bring up this point, however.

The Expanding Professorial Role

When asked about the significant changes and challenges that have occurred in their professorial role, a common response from faculty across all my institutions was that they "wear many hats" and execute many more responsibilities now that may not have traditionally been understood as part of the professor's role, responsibilities which they did not have when they first started out in their careers. It is, of course, the older faculty who can provide this perspective as they can assess over time what has changed. This includes a lot more administrative work, particularly in data collection, reporting, and assessment. In large part this is because the institution is small and the full-time faculty numbers have shrunk so drastically since 2010. Explains Carol, a faculty member, "There's fewer people to divide the work amongst so everybody's got to step and do something." Said Gwynn, another faculty member, "I have felt, particularly in recent years, that the number of things that faculty are asked to do is growing." In this particular institution, I wondered to what extent faculty felt pressured to take on these added administrative tasks without complaint because they felt worried that their jobs were on the line. And, in fact, in Peter, a former mid-level administrator, I got an answer. He said that when the new administration came on board, he was a tenure-track faculty member, but as positions were being eliminated, he was given the not-so-subtle message that he could either assume mid-level administrator responsibilities or be ushered out. He took the mid-level administrator responsibilities.

Two areas where faculty have been required by administrators to take a more participatory role are admissions and career advising. For example, department chairs must spend six Saturdays a year attending Open Houses because if prospective students

can meet with faculty—important for an institution that markets itself as a small, teaching institution—then that might sway the student to attend. Another professor spoke to me about having to work more with Career Services. Because of the institution's revised mission on preparing students for the workforce, the administration's expectation for all faculty is that they network with area employers to secure internships for their students.

Administration Managing Faculty

Faculty also noted the additional burden for data collecting and reporting requirements from the administration, Board, and accrediting agencies. The administration is more data-driven said the faculty. As an example of the kind of data collection a professor does at a daily level, a professor offered "Everything from our learning management system [Datatel] and actually quantifying the number of absences and when a student last attended class." Explained Simon, "I think we're measured a great deal more. Not just in terms of the traditional outcomes like how much research do you publish, or what the students think of your teaching. But I think there's a real sense that, in my view, that we got to sort of prove our worth." Part of proving one's worth in this administration is to prove that your department or program, or your course is a revenue stream rather than a cost center, explained a professor, echoing phrases she has heard from administrators.

In an institution that is operating more like a business, a few faculty members mentioned to me that professors are more "managed" now by administration. According to a department chair: "I think it is we are more managed in terms of sometimes the administration will tell us what kind of outcomes they're looking for, not just in terms of student learning outcomes, but departmental outcomes. You've got to have this many

students in a class, you've got to have this many majors, your majors should be employable or have a good admissions rate to graduate and professional schools. So there's more discussion of those types of things between the administration and faculty than 15 years ago—those just weren't discussed." Faculty are also challenged to change academic programs to "reflect the changing marketplace," said a professor. Senior-level administrators who believe in making data-driven decisions confirmed this and explained that faculty can't be insulated from issues such as financial aid, admissions, and retention because it directly impacts their roles in the institution.

A professor who is a member of the Promotion and Tenure Committee explained that assessment is part of the job now of a professor, and it has started to be considered in promotion and tenure decisions as part of the service component of the evaluation (faculty are evaluated on teaching, scholarship, and service):

> But I think now when promotion and tenure decisions are made, there is sort of an expectation that you have to be a good corporate citizen. And I don't mean just being nice to our fellow staff and faculty and that sort of thing. But you've got to be able to do those other kinds of tasks well too. You can't just say, "Well, I'm not doing assessment. I'm not taking part in this kind of administrative task." That would not be seen as being that good, corporate citizen.

This professor, too, echoes the institution-service orientation rather than the self-service orientation.

All of these examples of the expansion of the professorial role have led, asserted a few faculty members sadly, to far less free time and decreased socializing amongst faculty. Informal interactions are on the wane, they said. One example offered up by a professor was that she noticed that faculty didn't eat together in the cafeteria as often as they used to. The result, he said, is "we're kind of across-the-college less connected because we don't have those places of meeting. But I think it's in part, a function of just

not having as much time." And the loss of this especially for newer faculty, she continued, is that she, herself, benefitted greatly from the informal, cafeteria conversations she would have with her more seasoned colleagues when she was a new faculty member. Lunch was an opportunity to learn about social norms, about the role of the professor, classroom management, etc.

> Carol: I actually spent a lot of time in my first year talking…like going to lunch in the cafeteria with people who had been here for a long time to get a sense of how things functioned at the more…not in the written down way, but all those social norms and things like that. To kind of get a feel for what's the right thing to do. I had no clue how faculty meetings would run. Those were shocking at times, when people would get up and give very strong opinions and I'd be like, "Wow." [laughing].

What several faculty mentioned to me was their concern that these informal channels—like having lunch together at the cafeteria—were breaking down, especially under the new administration and the low faculty morale.

A Demoralized Faculty Remains Unbent

The sense of impending fiscal calamity, the continuous upheavals in faculty appointments and academic courses and programs, and the small size of the institution mean that the faculty at Morrisville don't have the luxury of retreating to their offices and ignoring the administration and the state of the institution. Many of the faculty members I interviewed are understandably anxious over job security.

Tom, a relatively new senior-level administrator shared his first impressions of the faculty by using battle terms such as the faculty being "in survivor mode," and "wounded." Another faculty member described herself and her colleagues as "in the trenches." Gwynn told me, "I think on any given day you would find a wide variety of attitudes represented and that they would go all the way from despair—I've just got to get

through this—all the way up to 'Oh, it will still be okay.' " Tom characterized the faculty overall as having "lost their voice," and "[f]aculty don't have power anywhere. Actually, the president doesn't either. It's the Trustees who hold the power. Come on, let's be honest, that's what it is. But there's a perceived power that we have. It's all perception. And so you have to make them feel like they've got a voice. And what that means is that they need some wins. They need some wins. And they haven't had any lately." A faculty member who left the institution said that the faculty at Morrisville don't have the "academic freedom that you should have. I'm not talking about academic freedom as in publishing whatever it is that you want, but the sort of academic freedom where you have the right to say whatever you say without being…[fired]. It's a situation where you've got somebody who really is a bully running an institution. They [the faculty] really don't feel like they can say anything."

There is a core group of faculty who have tried to continue to assert their voice and protest. A few faculty I interviewed mentioned that a group of them had written several letters to the Board of Trustees over the years. But, said a faculty leader, "it became quite clear that the Board of Trustees was not interested in hearing the faculty perspective on governance. They supported the president and we were told explicitly that they supported the president. So it became quite clear that pushing back at least that way, was not going to be effective." To put this kind of faculty action in context, this particular faculty member said,

> We've never been a kind of faculty that feels like we make/are involved in every decision the institution makes. I know that there are faculties who believe that they are they are the ultimate decision-making body, but we've never been that faculty. I think it's the curricular matters that are most troublesome.

Knowing that the Board will not support faculty against the administration, one professor described that the majority of those remaining faculty members are all trying to "run down the clock." Said Peter, the former mid-level administrator, "Now everyone's just sort of resigned and they're just waiting it out. I've heard that multiple times from faculty members over there, 'He's [the president] not going to stay there forever. At some point he'll be gone.' They're right. They're just lying low, trying to stay out of trouble because they know they will outlast him. And they're right. They will. If they can stay off his radar, then he will at some point leave."

POSTSCRIPT: About seven months after my visit, in spring 2014, the institution was once again in the news. The president was under fire from students and faculty. A student petition was circulated, signed by several hundred, calling for the president's resignation. The student organizers of the petition, according to the news article, faced disciplinary proceedings for disorderly conduct and violations of the institution's visitation and solicitation policies. Some faculty sent an unsigned letter to the Board of Trustees proclaiming that they did not have confidence in the president. The letter, which was posted online on a news organization's website, said that "The administration intimidated and bullied the faculty, with explicit threats of termination, into accepting curricular changes" and that the institution had become a place "driven by mediocrity, suspicion, and fear, a university desperate for tuition dollars" but not willing to provide its students with support and encouragement.

Subsequently 14 faculty members came forward taking credit for the letter, and once they had done that, another six came forward, making the number of faculty signers 20 out of 24 full-time faculty. Two months later after this protest, the local newspaper

reported that the institution offered buyouts to 15 faculty, many of them tenured, requesting that if they accepted the payment, they would also have to give up tenure, release all claims against the university, and respond with the provided prescribed language if asked why they left. The same newspaper article contacted a representative from the American Association of University Professors to provide comment on the situation and the representative noted that it sounded as if the institution was trying to "quiet opposition" and that "it's a move against faculty and faculty governance…. That would be highly suspect."

Faculty Band Together

In the midst of this roiling change, the full-time faculty members who survived the faculty cuts have remained a tightknit, cohesive group, and they describe themselves as such. As a faculty member said,

> It has been something I explain to myself by saying the word "faculty" is a singular noun. Which is a strange thing for a group of people who really do have very independent notions and who sometimes believe in their right to pretty fiercely say what they are too…. We have worked as a group. We have seen ourselves as the faculty. Unified. Which doesn't mean that we always agree about things. But we have a sense of loyalty to each other that's really quite significant.

Said another faculty member, " 'Family of scholars' is a term we used to always use." Peter, no longer at the institution, but who remains in touch with several faculty agreed.

> Peter: They're very close. And they really do look out for one another. That doesn't mean that everyone always agreed on everything, but as a group, they do things together. They respect one another. You don't see the little squabbles you usually…I'll give you an example. When I was a post-doc at Carnegie-Mellon, I sat in on a faculty meeting. There was this big blowout about what color carpet they were going to put in the hallway…. I mean, it almost came to blows [laughs].

But at Morrisville, Peter said there was a lot of cross-disciplinary interaction, and "we did a lot of co-teaching. A lot of guest lectures for one another. It was a close bunch." Said

Carol, "I know people and am able to say, 'Hey, let's work together.' Working with people across many departments on research or different activities. That just wouldn't happen at a large institution because you wouldn't know people in the other departments."

Standing By the Collegiate Learning Assessment

As with the previous four institutions in this study, SACS was a driving force in the development of SLO and SLO assessment at Morrisville University. Morrisville University had a SACS reaccreditation in 2012. Carol recalled, "Yes, I think it was the SACS accrediting process that started that conversation [about SLO assessment] but now I think we have it just because we need to have it." For SACS, according to Tom, a senior-level administrator very familiar with the accreditation process, it's all about Standard 3.3.1.[28] And, said Tom, "That's really what the crux of it is. I think a lot of institutions were hit because they didn't have strong learning outcomes."

What makes this institution different from the others in my study is that senior-level administrators weren't a driver for assessment at the institution. In fact, it was a faculty member who advocated strongly for it. To be sure, the reason he was looking at assessments at all was because he had taken on the additional responsibility (this was before the current president took office) for institutional effectiveness. In this case, he was not considered a mid-level administrator but a faculty member who happened to have administrative duties in the area of institutional effectiveness.

Faculty Trust the Messenger and Therefore Support the CLA

This faculty member recalled that it was in about 2005 or 2006, when he was reviewing all the different things the institution was doing to assess their general

[28] This states, "The institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement."

education learning outcomes, he found out about the CLA. He first worked with faculty to pare down the learning outcomes because there were too many—there were learning outcomes for every course in the General Education program. In the end, they pared it down to four. In his research looking for assessments to measure outcomes for general education, he remembered he came across the CLA, learned more about it, and then "did a number of presentations to the faculty [at Faculty Assembly], and said I think this would benefit Morrisville because it helps us to assess all our learning outcomes and it's also something…it gives us something we can look at over time." And because there was such a hodgepodge of different assessments being employed at the time at the institution, he continued, the CLA "seemed like a nice match. So the faculty got on board." The CAO at the time was also familiar with the CLA, and the president at the time wanted to know who else was using it. Upon learning some peer institutions were also using the CLA, she agreed to commit the institution. The institution began using the CLA in fall 2007, and joined the CIC/CLA Consortium a few years later.

A faculty member recalled that when the CLA was introduced at FA, it received a favorable response from most of the faculty because of the messenger—a well-liked, well-respected, trusted, and influential faculty member among his peers: "Well, [he] is a very well-respected person, so with his endorsement, I'm certain that many people thought, 'Ok, [he] thinks it's okay. It's probably okay.' " Certainly a big factor contributing to faculty's early adoption and support of the CLA was that it had been introduced by one of their own. I interviewed several faculty members who were considered by their peers to be leaders and proponents of the CLA on campus. Says one of them, "There are a handful of us who have been here since CLA was first adopted and

we're sort of leading it and everybody else is kind of going 'Well, they think it's a good thing. We ought to go along with it.' " From the outset, the CLA was faculty-driven.

But, according to Peter, who was involved in the CLA from its inception, while faculty were persuaded by the messenger, they also were already interested in critical thinking broadly and thought that the CLA was "a good measure of our liberal education student learning outcomes. " (Liberal education at Morrisville is general education). Tom shared his surprise that he did not encounter faculty resistance to assessment and the CLA as he did at his former CIC institution: "I haven't either [found that resistance]. I'm very pleased, I have to say. And you know, part of it I think, too, is it's a small faculty. I think there's a great benefit to that." Another faculty member recalled, "I don't think there's anybody who's opposed to using it. So they might be totally neutral about it but I don't think anybody's opposed to using it."

One faculty member's recollections affirmed that the faculty were generally enthusiastic about the CLA, and in particular, the institution's positive CLA value-added results: "This was data we felt we had real ownership of. This is refreshingly empowering for faculty." It boosted faculty spirits because, explained a mid-level administrator who works with faculty on the CLA, it provided evidence of what they felt they were already doing well—teaching effectively: "I think the faculty want it, not because of SACS (I mean, they know that that's there), but because it's one way in which to show that they're effective in their jobs." The CLA can be used to respond to faculty critics, argued a faculty member. Critics who want to know whether the faculty is making a positive impact on student learning,

> Simon: …I think having something like the CLA is a way of at least responding to those critics. Some of those critics are on our Board—"So, what are you doing

> at Morrisville? How do you know you're doing it?" At least the CLA, to me more so than other methods we've used, gives us a way of at least saying back at least we can show something that shows that our students are making progress in the following areas…. Because we used to answer those criticisms by saying, "We're working on it. We're making it better." We couldn't really nail down what the 'it' was. I think the CLA gives us a tool more so than some other methods.

In the case of Morrisville, what this faculty member suggests is that the CLA might help strengthen and validate faculty's role in the institution, particularly to the president and the Board, as they feel expendable to them. Said Gwynn, "And I have very much come to appreciate the fact that I now have data that I can use to show how well we're doing in the [ ] department, for instance." Gwynn also mentioned how positive CLA results could elevate and advance Morrisville's reputation as a teaching institution: "But I want to be an advocate for it [the CLA] because I want people to realize it's not just [my department] that can use this, but this says good things about what's happening at Morrisville. And it also provides, or it will provide, as the future years unfold, a way to show us whether or now we are maintaining the things that we've been so proud of." This is similar to what GSU administrators said about how the CLA could help "tell their story," and how Stamper College's administrators and faculty thought it helped get them noticed outside of their region.

But as in the other institutions in this study, a couple of faculty noted a difference in response to the CLA according to more established faculty members versus newer faculty members. While more established faculty were the ones who introduced the CLA and subsequently became advocates for it, there is the perception that newer faculty overall are more receptive to assessment. Peter observed, "But there were others who were younger, and maybe not younger in age, but younger as faculty members, who were more willing to embrace assessment." Said a faculty member,

> I've had a couple of recent hires. These are relatively new Ph.Ds. They seem to roll with it [assessment]…. maybe it's now part of the graduate education that people are talking about it more. When I got here [in the beginning of the academic year] and my newest colleague just started this August and we talk about unit assessment and she says, "Ok. Fine." It's just like part of her job. It's more the older faculty who are resistant to it. They're just feeling like, "Oh, isn't that someone else's responsibility?"

Perhaps because the newer faculty members have not known an environment where SLO and SLO assessment were not institutional concerns (in fall 2013, the CLA had been operational nationally for nearly 10 years), it might be there really is nothing to "get used to" for them.

Asserting Professional Authority: Faculty Stand Firm on the CLA

When the current president wanted to stop using the CLA and implement portfolio assessment for all departments instead, the faculty who had supported the CLA stood their ground and fought to keep it. Morrisville is unique among the institutions in my study because faculty initiated the CLA. Explained an influential faculty member:

> …about the only thing we've maintained is the CLA [laughs], ironically. Only because it's been so deeply embedded within our assessment practices since we started using it that the president told us at one point that he was going to drop the CLA. He didn't like it; it was just a test and it cost too much money. We pushed back because we knew the value of it, and we had embedded it. And not only in our Liberal Education program evaluation or assessment, but many departments used elements of it as well in their departmental assessment. So we pushed back on that and that really has been the only thing in the last three years that, I think, we have been successful at. We've lost all of our professional development money. We've lost curricular fights. We've lost academic policy fights. CLA is probably the only bright spot.

One reason that a faculty member believed faculty felt the need to fight for it is because "the faculty feel ownership of assessment, more so than anything else at the institution." The CLA was something they, as a group, decided to adopt—"the decision to use the CLA was purely within the academic area," said a faculty member—and implement to

assess Liberal Education outcomes which they had determined; the positive value-added results gave them a sense of validation that they were teaching effectively; and in claiming "ownership" of the CLA, the faculty felt that it was in their jurisdiction. So the CLA, according to this faculty leader, has symbolized for faculty one (small but significant) victory over administrative authority. Other faculty I spoke with also pointed out that in the face of all the changes that have been imposed on them in recent years by senior administrators, keeping the CLA was one of the few things that that they have successfully "won."

Faculty at Morrisville also expressed that their support of the CLA was a way for them to be proactive about the general tide of SLO assessment in higher education and believed, in being proactive, they could control it: the selection of it, the delivery of it, what to do with the results, for instance. Here are what two faculty members said about faculty taking control of assessment:

> Simon: In terms of assessment…I would rather be in a position of having a great deal of input into the assessment plan, what the assessment results say, what kinds of recommendations, rather than having somebody from another office just do it. I do see that kind of work as having changed but I also see that if you really care about your program and ultimately the students in it, you've got to be involved in those kinds of decisions.
>
> Carol: What everybody's afraid of is that we're going to be treated like K-12. So that we're going to have to do end-of-course tests and things like that. That I think is the real fear. I think that's part of why SACS is trying to get out in front of that, and to be like we're already assessing, you don't have to make us do more stuff.

Faculty at Morrisville are exerting their professional authority to define the terms under which they incorporate assessment. They are establishing the jurisdictional boundaries.

In all of my participating institutions, I tried to gauge to what extent faculty were collectively aware of and knowledgeable about the CLA. A faculty member said that all

full-time faculty should be aware of it since CLA presentations are given yearly at FA by the individual in charge of implementing the CLA on campus. Currently, this individual is the Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness. In the past it has been a faculty member with responsibilities for institutional effectiveness. One faculty member said that it is important to keep the CLA front and center with his colleagues: "We found that we really have to do ongoing discussion and professional development around the idea of assessment to try and get faculty to the place where they feel comfortable with it" and he realized this "…even when I was first pushing for the CLA here, I thought well we really have to every single year remind people what the CLA is. Because for people who don't think about it all the time, it can seem foreign" and therefore "we have to do on-going training about it. We have to talk about it every year—what it is, what the results are—so that people can kind of keep up with it." He brings up the point that just because one secures faculty support to introduce the CLA into the institution, it is an ongoing effort to make sure that SLO assessment is then not relegated as a background activity. When he speaks of "on-going training," he suggests putting links in place to connect faculty to assessment (which I shall discuss later).

Faculty Articulate Assessment's Place in the Professorial Role

Overall, the faculty I interviewed seemed to think that assessment has become part of their job as a professor. A professor reflected, "Never thought formal assessment would be part of the job when I was a graduate student—I like it. I'm impressed that I understand it [formal assessment] at all. We are not at all trained to do it." And as I brought up earlier, one professor mentioned that he found that younger colleagues just assumed that assessment was part of the job.

One way to help faculty integrate assessment into their professorial role is by framing the aim of assessment to improve teaching and learning. As a former faculty member turned mid-level administrator, Peter explained that his perspective on assessment shifted when he transitioned roles: "…as a faculty member, I didn't see the importance of it [assessment] like I did as an administrator because there was nobody ever telling us what the importance was." So when Peter stepped into an administrative position where he was responsible for the institution's teaching and learning center, implementing the CLA, and helping faculty interpret SLO assessment results to improve teaching and learning, he made sure to communicate to faculty the aim of assessment thusly:

> I remember what I told faculty members was this is what we use to make sure we teach better, to make sure that students are…that we're doing the best job we can possibly for students. So this is the way we can find out. We can tap into and see if students are really learning what we think they're learning and if they're not, then we can go back and we can make adjustments to that. And we can't do that if we're not keeping track. When you say it like that and really link it to the classroom, then it's easier to see, but without that link, which is part of why we made that last loop for the assessment program in general—the teaching and learning thing—because faculty didn't get it, if you didn't make the last link.

And to be a better teacher is how a professor articulated the aim of assessment:

> I think there is the how do we help students progress to where we need them to be. One of the areas we know our students struggle in is critical thinking. I want my students to be better critical thinkers. Period. Regardless of what we're telling SACS, that's what I want for them. And so I think with our curriculum, both at the Liberal Education level and at the department level, it helps inform us about things that we might be doing in the curriculum and then it also helps us thinking about what might we be doing in particular classes.

One faculty member said that as professionals, SLO assessment is helpful to them in informing how they are doing as teachers.

> Holly: It directly goes back to student outcomes. We want to be effective. We want to understand what works and what doesn't. And why, if possible [laughs].

> As a professional, I think we all have that common denominator. All of our faculty do. The process of getting to it is what the debate is about…. we want to understand things. We don't want things just handed to us. We want that appreciation of learning ourselves and understanding before something occurs.

In a few cases, I interviewed faculty who said that as a result of CLA findings, they altered their teaching strategy. This occurred more on a case-by-case basis rather than through any institution-wide policy. As I demonstrate in the next section, the institutional structures in place at the institution are so tenuous that there is not process to make any broad changes based on assessment results. One professor said that because of the CLA, she knows that students struggle with interpreting graphs. So she and her department have incorporated more information on graph interpretation, and "the test I'll be giving tomorrow has graphs on it…. it's [CLA results] impacting both the curriculum and content-specific classes.

Linking Faculty to the Collegiate Learning Assessment

Based on Peter's experience with assessment at Morrisville, and his dual perspective as an administrator and faculty member, he believes that multiple constituencies in the institution need to be involved in assessment because they can each pull different needs from it:

> …I think it's a shared responsibility. Because people use the information in different ways. We use it to make changes in our class…. or you use it to make changes in your program. At the department level, they may look at it and use that information to make tweaks in the program or to assess whether or not the program is worth it. There are different levels. It's everybody's job.

In running the teaching and learning center and overseeing the CLA, Peter played a critical role in linking faculty to assessment results like the CLA.

> Peter: [my job was] clos[ing] the loop for assessment, and [to be] the QEP Director. What would happen is we'd have people do their assessment reports and then we'd give them their data and then they'd just sit on it because they didn't

> know what to do with it. So we realized that we needed somebody who could then help people look at their data and say this is how we can translate better learning in the classroom, so how do you use that. That's what we had done.

Peter described how he helped faculty members "write their program goals, their student learning/program learning outcomes, in a way that would be manageable, and making sure that they weren't too small, too large, measurable, making sure they had direct measures, indirect measures. At that time, we were still using the CLA, which was great because we had this direct measure that almost everyone used." He recalled how the Assessment Committee had to report to FA, and the Committee was a forum "where we [faculty and administrators] really talked a lot about what it should be like, and what's the best fit for the type of institution we are, and what our mission statement was. We spent of a lot of time trying to figure out how do we best do that." The Assessment Committee also discussed how to bring the institution's liberal education SLO and the mission statement closer together.

However, since 2010 with all the subsequent changes, the structural links connecting assessment to teaching have faltered. The institution's teaching and learning center, which was helping faculty make the links from SLO assessment results to teaching practices, stopped operating when the new president came to Morrisville (funding was discontinued), the Assessment Committee stopped meeting regularly, and the Director of Institutional Research was a half-time position with only data gathering responsibility. In the relatively short time that these links weakened, there was no one or no group connecting the data to bring about change on the academic side. A mid-level administrator said that, with a Director of Institutional Research working on half-time time, what has happened is that "…per the SACS Comprehensive Standards, you're

supposed to be taking that data and using it to improve whatever it is that you're doing. What was becoming problematic with the half-time position was getting, on the academic side, getting that data to the right people to be able to use it in changing either their pedagogy or the way they did their course mappings or whatever they were doing in terms of the departments curriculums or their individual class curriculums."

But in fall 2013, the Director of Institutional Research went from a half-time to a full-time position. With the arrival of the new CAO, the Assessment Committee has been revived and has started meeting again. The Assessment Committee's charge, according to someone who will be on the committee, is to review all the different assessments in use at the institution and to consider whether they still need to be used. It also reviews all the annual assessment reports that come in from departments. If recommendations contained within have curricular implications, they get sent over to the Curriculum Committee. A member of the Curriculum Committee mentioned that it is reviewing recent CLA results to make recommendations about the writing program. A senior-level administrator on the committee explained that Assessment Committee is the group that will examine how to "close the loop"—make decisions based on the data: "We've got to work on process. The protocols are in place. The procedures are in place and they're being followed and that is good. But now, what to do next. The next steps are not in place well." In terms of closing the loop, this senior-level administrator intends on taking SLO assessment findings like the CLA to the individual academic units and recommending that specific actions be implemented.

Conclusion

In Morrisville University, then, we observe an institution where the CLA was brought to the institution through faculty initiative and faculty support. Seen as a tool to help improve teaching and learning, faculty believed that SLO assessment was in their jurisdiction. When a new, authoritative administration started stripping faculty of their professional authority, bypassing their power to have a say in academic affairs, the faculty stood their ground and fought to keep the CLA when it looked like that, too, was going to be taken from them. Morrisville University also shows that in spite of having faculty support of the CLA, in order to sustain assessment activities and keep faculty thinking about and incorporating assessment results to improve teaching and learning, it is important to have structural links such as an Assessment Committee or a mid-level administrator such as a Director of Institutional Research in place. On a final note, in early 2015, Morrisville University announced that the current president would be stepping down at the end of the academic year and that a presidential search had commenced. For the faculty I interviewed, perhaps they feel a sense of victory that they have, indeed, "run down the clock."

CHAPTER VII

UNDERSTANDING FACULTY RESPONSE TO STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENTS AND THE COLLEGIATE LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Introduction and Overview

In this chapter I examine the data from across all five case studies to answer my research question, "Why does collective faculty response to student learning outcomes like the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) vary among institutions?" In asking this central question, I subsequently asked two sub-questions: (a) How do faculty understand the aim of student learning outcomes assessments like the CLA; and (b) How do faculty perceive this kind of assessment impacting their role as professors? I make the following claims, drawn from my analysis of the cases:

1. Faculty apply a "collegial framework" that guides their role within the institution and their expectations of administrators' roles. Conversely, administrators apply an "administrative framework" that guides their role within the institution and their expectations of faculty's roles. When the collegial framework confronts the administrative framework, particularly around student learning outcomes (SLO) assessment and the CLA, it provides an opportunity to view and magnify this interaction and understand faculty response to assessment.
2. Faculty articulate the aim of assessment in several ways: assessment for accountability, assessment to improve teaching and learning (or some combination of the two), and assessment for institutional status elevation.

Faculty understanding of these aims influenced whether they saw assessment as something to be incorporated into their professorial role or not.

3. The professorial role in these five institutions is changing. Some faculty incorporate assessment into their professional role whereas others do not.
4. There is variance in faculty response to SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA within institutions.
5. Jurisdictional boundaries of assessment vary from institution to institution. These boundaries are evolving and are being negotiated and renegotiated. Several of the institutions in my study constructed a "culture of assessment" to try to anchor these boundaries.

I begin with a brief summary of each of the five case studies. I then examine each of these five claims in detail, drawing from what I have learned from the five institutions, and presenting the evidence that contributes to answering the research question. Finally, I conclude with a re-cap of the purpose of my study, summarize my conclusions, and consider the implication to theory and policy. I then discuss the limitation of the study, propose directions for further research, and end with a final reflection.

A Brief Summary of the Five Case Studies

Here, I briefly re-cap the five institutions that participated in this study.

Stamper College

This is a case study of an institution where a strong-willed CAO decided, as part of her vision of improving academic quality, that she was going to "build a culture of assessment" at Stamper by ushering in SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA. When she introduced the CLA at an all-faculty meeting, they revolted. The CAO retreated, changed

tactics, and put assessment in faculty's jurisdiction, resulting in faculty accepting the CLA and SLO assessment, and trying to find ways to use its results to improve teaching and learning practices. At Stamper College, faculty wariness over past administrative overreach, combined with a senior-level administrator who had a reputation for being strong-willed, influenced faculty's initial interpretation of the CLA as something punitive and resulted in faculty's extreme initial reaction. Once assessment was defined as a faculty responsibility, as part of their jurisdiction, the resistance dissipated and faculty incorporated assessments, SLOs, and the CLA into their work.

Grant State University

This is a case study of a bureaucratic, public institution. As part of a state system of higher education institutions, Grant State University (GSU) reports to a System Administration that is run by a Board of Governors appointed by, and accountable to, the state legislature. This state legislature emphasizes accountability, measurement, and outcomes. The current CAO—very popular and trusted by faculty—proposed the CLA to GSU's Faculty Assembly and continues to be an active advocate of the CLA there. Here, too, the CAO articulated building a "culture of assessment" at GSU, and in this case, the institution constructed an assessment infrastructure to enforce (via reporting and accountability mechanisms) and encourage (via the CLA Institute, financial incentives, and hiring mid-level administrators to oversee assessment) faculty engagement in assessment. Although the representative Faculty Assembly voted to implement the CLA, faculty reaction to the CLA has been mixed, with a solid, core group of faculty engaged in CLA activities through GSU's CLA Institute, and the rest seeming to be less supportive, resistant, or indifferent.

Redeemer College

Governance at Redeemer College is shaped and driven by a religious worldview that results in a collegial organization with a powerful, unified Faculty Assembly. For Redeemer faculty, discussion and debate are considered a faculty member's professional duty. When senior-level administrators told faculty that the institution must develop SLO and SLO assessment to meet external accreditation, faculty verbally resisted. But the administrators utilized Redeemer's "discovery process" of discussion, debate, and an airing of concerns to dampen this faculty resistance and to ensure that the development of SLO and the choice of SLO assessment were faculty-driven. They merely offered the CLA as a suggestion for SLO assessment, leaving it up to faculty to decide whether they wanted it or not. Once faculty collectively took part in this discovery process, they moved on to accepting SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA.

University of Carlow

The University of Carlow is the "youngest" institution in my study not only in terms of its history of using the CLA, but also in its reaccreditation timeline. When I visited the campus in fall 2013, the campus was beginning to prepare for an accreditation visit for the following year. Thus, it is a case study of an institution in a relatively early stage of incorporating SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA. According to interviewees, Carlow has a top-down, bureaucratic model of organization and yet it also operates according to an informal, collegial model. In this case study we see faculty understanding that they must address SLO and SLO assessment in order to meet the requirements of external accreditors (and senior-level administrators' interest in SLO and SLO assessment). Administrators are not issuing mandates. Instead, they are utilizing informal

networks, and collegial relationships with a very small group of faculty to gradually win over larger faculty support. As assessment discussions begin to take root and shape at Carlow, we witness through the interviews faculty struggling to identify the aims of SLO assessment and its impact (or potential impact) on their professional role and its overall place at Carlow.

Morrisville University

Morrisville University stands out from the other four case studies in that it is the only instance where a faculty leader introduced the CLA to faculty. Because this faculty was a trusted colleague, and he endorsed the CLA, faculty supported the use of the CLA on campus. A few years after the institution started using the CLA, Morrisville's financial crisis brought it close to extinction, and a new administration swept in, ushering in radical and rapid changes over a three-year period that left the faculty ranks significantly reduced and the remaining faculty disempowered and demoralized. Faculty's past experiences with, and expectations of, a collegial organization operating under shared governance were swept aside as the new leadership, guided by a corporate model of organization, acted authoritatively with Board support and with little to no consultation with faculty. When leadership wanted to discontinue the use of the CLA, citing cost as the reason, and implement e-portfolio instead, the faculty stood their ground (because they had lost so much in other areas) and fought to keep it, wielding it as a symbol of trying to maintain some of their professorial role and identity, which they felt were being shorn away.

A Collegial Framework That Guides the Professorial Role

In this section, I examine the claim that faculty apply a "collegial framework" that guides their role within the institution and their expectations of administrators' roles. Conversely, administrators apply an "administrative framework" that guides their role within the institution and their expectations of faculty's roles. When the collegial framework confronts the administrative framework, particularly around SLO assessment and the CLA, it provides an opportunity to view and magnify this interaction. I conclude that the congruence or dissonance between the collegial framework and the administrative framework influences faculty response to the CLA.

A "Collegial Framework" and an "Administrative Framework"

The collegial and bureaucratic models of organization prevail in the literature and provide useful heuristics to analyze the pattern of relation and interaction between faculty and administration. Simply stated, the collegial model represents an ideal-type in which an informal hierarchy exists, the source of power is based on professional expertise rather than official position, an informal communication system exists amongst a community of scholars, and decisions are made via group consensus (Austin and Gamson 1982; Birnbaum 1988). In a collegial organization, faculty bring expectations of shared governance to their workplace (Gumport 1997). In contrast, the bureaucratic model depicts an organization structured to meet its goals as efficiently as possible, it is hierarchical and governed by administrative authority and legal rationality, and compensation and promotion are based on formal assessment. Decreased informal interaction is replaced by formal interaction, leading to increased bureaucracy where rules and regulations mediate the interaction rather than shared norms (Birnbaum 1988).

In this model, it is not that shared governance is abolished, but faculty participation in governance seems less "active," the faculty representative body is perceived as weak, and administration seems to guide the faculty more than defer to faculty.

There is also a body of literature that extends the collegial and bureaucratic models of organization to collegial and bureaucratic mindsets of groups, or cognitive frameworks, within the organization. This literature suggests that faculty and administrators apply different cognitive frameworks to the institution in which they work. For example, Patricia Gumport (2002) referred to this cognitive framework in terms of "logic." Faculty operate with a "social institution logic," a mindset shaped by the collegial model, where the shapers of knowledge are disciplines, and faculty drive change and continuity; administrators tend to use an "industry logic," a mindset that is influenced by the bureaucratic model of institutions, where the shapers of knowledge are markets, and managers are at the helm. Others described this as professional authority versus professional authority (Birnbaum 1988; Corson 1960; Etzioni 1964; Geiger 2004). I refer to these cognitive frameworks as the "collegial framework" and the "administrative framework."

Collegial and administrative frameworks can co-exist within an organization. Both Gumport (1997) and Geiger (2004) suggest that the co-existence of two different frameworks in the organization results in conflict. In my interviews, I explored faculty's and administrators' frameworks and determined that the majority of faculty do apply a collegial framework to the institution even in instances where they fully acknowledge that their institution operates in a non-collegial model of organization. Whether they worked in a bureaucratic or even an authoritarian organization, they still held on to the

belief, sometimes wistful, sometimes frustrated, sometimes expectant, that the institution *should* operate with more faculty voice and authority on institutional matters, that shared governance should really be *shared*, and that their professional authority certainly took primacy over administrative authority in academic and curricular matters.

How the Collegial Framework Shapes Professorial Response to the CLA

What my data revealed is that faculty apply a collegial framework that guides their role within the institution and their expectations of administrators' roles. The collegial framework guides how the group exerts its professional authority through formal and informal channels (e.g., Faculty Assembly, committees, personal relationships), and it shapes the collective faculty's shared norms and values (e.g., an institution-service orientation versus a self-service orientation). Conversely, administrators apply an administrative framework that guides their role within the institution and their expectations of faculty's roles. This framework shapes how administrators determine whether to exert their authority by mandates, persuasion, or some combination of the two. It also influences the degree to which they defer to professional authority, particularly in academic matters. The introduction and incorporation of SLO assessment and the CLA in an institution provided an opportunity to view and magnify the collegial framework and the administrative framework interacting. What I found was that the congruence or dissonance between the collegial framework and the administrative framework influenced faculty response to the CLA.

In Table 3 (p. 315), I lay out faculty and administrator frameworks for each of the five institutions in my study. To determine this, I synthesized overall faculty perceptions of the institution in which they worked—their perceptions of the organizational model of

their college or university. In interviews, I asked faculty to describe the *current* organizational model of their institution; the organizational model under *prior* administrations was significant as well in influencing faculty response to the CLA, especially if the CLA was introduced several years before when the organization was operating differently. Let me illustrate. When the CLA was introduced to faculty in Morrisville, it was running under a collegial model of organization, which changed drastically in 2010 to an autocratic/corporate organization when a new president and new administrators took over. Hence, in the cell under "Organizational Model," I split it to reflect "Collegial" for when the CLA was introduced, and "Autocratic/Corporate" for what it is currently. In some cases, such as Stamper College, the past organizational model was autocratic before the CLA was introduced; it reverted to collegial after faculty revised the governance structure to increase their power, and that is what it was when the CLA was introduced.

Responses in Stamper College, Grant State University (GSU), and Redeemer College were fairly consistent in that faculty identified the model as either collegial or bureaucratic. Morrisville University was the only instance where 100% of the faculty (current and former) described the institution as "autocratic," and some added "corporate." The University of Carlow is an example of a mixed organization because in the overall running of the institution, faculty articulated that it was a bureaucratic organization necessitated by the need to coordinate so many disparate units (e.g., schools, colleges, programs both graduate and undergraduate) under one umbrella, yet the faculty in the undergraduate schools that I interviewed overall described a collegial organization run via informal relationships at the mid-management level.

Then I established the collective faculty framework within each institution. To establish the framework, I asked a series of questions to illuminate faculty professional authority. These questions centered primarily around faculty role and responsibilities, faculty governance within the institution, faculty's working relationship with the administration, and administration's involvement in curriculum, teaching, and assessment of student learning.

I also determined the administrator framework, asking administrators and faculty questions to establish administrative authority. These questions centered on administrator role and responsibilities, administrative leadership and governance, administrative involvement in curriculum, and faculty relationship with administration. The administrator framework is one that administrators oftentimes articulated as needing to be directive because administrators have a "big picture" vision for the institution and the institution's place and survival in higher education. They often described their role as a mediator between the faculty (and other groups in the institution) and the environment outside of the institution. Thus, they reported that they needed to keep their eyes on a myriad of issues like budget, cost containment, regulations, reporting, accountability, admissions, and expanding and introducing new programs, and that this might result in their involvement—sometimes uninvited and unwelcomed by faculty—in curriculum and academics.

In Table 3, it is important to note that the "Administrator Framework" is the framework that administrators used at the time they were introducing CLA to faculty to guide how they went about introducing SLO assessment to them. Administrator framework is not necessarily static; there are varying points in time and issues where

administrators press their administrative authority more forcefully than in others. In Stamper College, for example, the CAO pressed hard initially on faculty with the CLA, then pulled back when she saw how strongly they reacted, and took a more collegial framework approach to persuading faculty to support the CLA. Administrator framework at Morrisville University changed from "Collegial" to "Administrative" when the administration changed.

TABLE 3. Faculty and Administrator Frameworks

Institution	Organizational Model	Faculty Framework	Administrator Framework	Initial Faculty Response to CLA
Stamper College	Collegial	Collegial	Administrative	Resistance
			Collegial (later)	Acceptance (later)
Grant State University	Bureaucratic	Mixed: Administrative and Collegial	Administrative	Passive Resistance/Passive Acceptance
Redeemer College	Collegial	Collegial	Collegial	Acceptance
University of Carlow	Bureaucratic and Collegial	Collegial	Mixed: Administrative and Collegial	Passive Resistance/Passive Acceptance
Morrisville University	Collegial	Collegial	Collegial	Acceptance
	Autocratic/ Corporate (current)		Administrative (later)	

In the last column in Table 3, I noted initial faculty response to the CLA. I only included initial response to the CLA in this table and not their response to SLO assessment in general because in all five institutions, faculty knew that outside forces such as regional accreditors required institutions to adopt SLO and SLO assessment, and I wanted to tease that out from their response to the CLA.

When faculty applied a collegial framework that conflicted with administrators' administrative framework, as in the case of Stamper College, then faculty response to the

CLA was the opposite of what administration wanted. In the case of Stamper College, after the departure of an autocratic president, the faculty instituted a new governance structure to expand their powers, resulting in a more collegial institution. But when the CAO, who had already implemented the CLA at her discretion, decided to try to force the faculty to take a sample CLA exam in an all-faculty gathering, they rose up. Faculty felt that the CAO had bypassed their professional authority, and that the CAO, in trying to make them take the sample CLA exam, was planning to use their responses on it to assert her administrative authority in a punitive manner (i.e., fire people). Thereafter, getting faculty buy-in to the CLA posed a challenge. So the CAO changed tactics and proceeded along a more collegial framework by deferring to other faculty to persuade their colleagues, to allow faculty-led committees such as the General Education Committee to determine SLO and SLO assessment for the institution. Once the CAO adopted a different framework, and put assessment in faculty's jurisdiction, faculty stopped resisting.

When faculty applied a collegial framework that was congruent with administrators' collegial framework, then faculty accepted the CLA. At Redeemer College, faculty consistently articulated that their duty as Redeemer faculty is to engage in the governance process, resulting in a very strong Faculty Assembly and intense faculty participation in governance through an extensive committee structure. In other institutions, this might result in conflict with administrators who are guided by the administrative framework, but this is minimized at Redeemer because the collegial framework guides faculty *and* administrators. There is very little assertion of administrative authority at Redeemer, and the few times that this has occurred, there has

been conflict between faculty and administration. Redeemer faculty expected to be consulted on assessment, and expected to be allowed a "discovery process" whereby they could discuss and debate the "why are we doing" assessment argument and examine and determine whether the CLA was the right fit for them.

In Morrisville University, faculty too were guided by a collegial framework, and when the CLA was introduced by a trusted faculty member (the only one of my five institutions where this occurred), there was actually no administrative authority asserted, and faculty received the CLA positively. But under a new administration in 2010, faculty felt that shared governance was effectively eliminated. This administration wanted to remove the CLA altogether and replace it with e-portfolios. Although the latter was going to happen whether faculty wanted it or not, faculty leadership stood their ground in insisting that the CLA remain. Their stance to keep the CLA was an assertion of professional autonomy, as Gary Rhoades would point out (1998)—faculty confronting the increasing managerial constraints to control their work by an authoritative, corporate administration. They fought to keep the CLA, claiming it as part of their work, under their jurisdiction.

Faculty at both the University of Carlow and Grant State University (GSU) articulated that they worked in bureaucratic, top down organizations. At Carlow, interestingly, we see a duality of frameworks in play by administrators, what McConnell and Mortimer (1971) refer to as a "bureaucratic structure and formal authority, with their emphasis on accountability and rationality, and functional authority and collegial organization, with their stress on informality. In other words, the dilemma is between power and influence" (p. 3-4). Since the financial distress and faculty strike that nearly

closed the institution permanently, the post-strike Board of Trustees and the president have operated the institution with a firmer hand. Administrators have told faculty that they must develop SLO and include SLO assessment into the curriculum—not only because administrators believe in the importance of assessment, but also because it is a requirement from the regional accreditor. In this bureaucratic institution, the representative Faculty Assembly is described as "weak" and "ineffectual" by several faculty because so many diverse schools and interests in the university are represented that the faculty as a body can't unite on issues. Administrators are a bit more circumspect in their description and characterize it as a group that could be more "active." So in a use of administrative authority, administrators bypassed the Faculty Assembly altogether in revising general education (which includes SLO and SLO assessment) and assembling a General Education Committee. The CLA was never addressed in Assembly.

However, at the level of day-to-day decision-making, faculty at Carlow often described their working relationships with academic administrators as "informal" and "collegial," and depicted a looseness of governance that seems to be based on a network of informal relationships. Administrators involved in academics also described their leadership style as "collegial," and as former academics themselves, they applied a collegial framework in working with faculty. They used persuasion rather than mandate. This is why I labeled the organizational model in Table 3 as "Bureaucratic and Collegial," and the administrator framework as "Mixed: Administrative and Collegial." As a result, faculty exposure to the CLA has thus far been deliberate and slow; senior-level administrators have limited faculty exposure to the CLA to a core group who implement the CLA through the First-year seminar and Senior capstone course and to a handful of

faculty who have taken part in the CLA in the Classroom Performance Task Academy. Administrators are hoping to cultivate these faculty members to be the proponents and voice for assessment to their faculty colleagues. Administrators expressed no intent to formalize assessment at the time of my visit, but said they are in a period of allowing faculty to acclimate in their own time and way.

At Grant State University (GSU), on the other hand, faculty understand that they work in a bureaucratic institution, and that there is a chain of accountability from them to the administration, to the statewide System Administration, to the Board of Governors, and to the state legislature and governor. In contrast to the University of Carlow where the administrator framework was mixed, here the faculty framework is mixed. Faculty carry an administrative framework because they have no illusions about the organizational model of their institution and the larger structure in which it operates, and they don't articulate that it should operate differently. They are realistic about their role in the organization. In this bureaucratic organization, administrators characterize the representative Faculty Assembly as too focused on trivial issues rather than substantive ones. Administrators have asserted their authority—what one professor described as a "benign authority"—to develop detailed report structures, with monetary incentives attached, to keep SLO and SLO assessment front and center with faculty. A couple of administrators spoke of working in the future to try to tie assessment to faculty evaluation. While a cadre of faculty have voluntarily participated in GSU's CLA Institute to develop CLA-like tasks for GSU courses, some mid-level administrators reported that larger numbers of faculty remain indifferent to assessment and that their response is a kind of passive resistance through lack of participation or interest in assessment.

At the University of Carlow and Grant State University, I categorized faculty response as "Passive Resistance/Passive Acceptance." What this category indicates is that while there was a small core group of faculty who were initially supportive about the CLA (primarily from having attended a CLA in the Classroom Performance Task Academy), the faculty overall seemed to be relatively neutral when the CLA was introduced on campus—neither greatly supportive of nor resistant enough to mount any protest. Additionally, it was unclear to what extent faculty overall in these institutions (outside of those who I interviewed) were really aware of the CLA presence on the campus. The *representative* nature of their respective faculty governing groups meant that the general population of faculty seemed somewhat shielded from knowledge about the CLA (perhaps beyond a vague knowing that the CLA was being implemented on the campus) and CLA results. In the other institutions—Stamper, Redeemer, and Morrisville—Faculty Assemblies required all full-time faculty to attend. And since Faculty Assemblies were the forums by which administrators made CLA updates and announcements (though in the case of University of Carlow, administrators did not bring up the CLA to Faculty Assembly), I believe that it made a difference in the extent to which faculty overall were familiar with the CLA.

Faculty Articulate the Aim of Assessment in Several Ways

Faculty across the institutions articulated their understanding of the aim of assessment consistently: assessment for accountability, assessment to improve teaching and learning (or some combination of the two), and assessment for institutional status elevation. Faculty understanding of these aims influenced their response to the CLA and whether

they perceived assessment as something to be incorporated into their professorial role (leading to my next and third claim).

Assessment for accountability

Four institutions had successfully received reaccreditation before my on-site visits in fall 2013. One—University of Carlow—was in the midst of preparing for its upcoming reaccreditation. Table 4 (below) lists each institution's regional accreditor, the year of its most recent accreditation, and the year that the institution began using the CLA. Because all three of the participating institutions' regional accreditors—SACS, HLC, and NEASC—require institutions to develop student learning outcomes (SLO) and put in place assessments to measure them, preparation for the accreditation was the primary driver for institutions to engage their faculty in conversations about SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA.

TABLE 4. Timeline: Institutional Accreditation and the CLA

Institution	Regional Accreditor	Year of most recent accreditation	CLA first implemented	CLA implemented in spring 2013?
Stamper College	SACS	2009	2005	Yes
Grant State University	SACS	2011	2007	Yes
Redeemer College	HLC	2010	2008	Yes
University of Carlow	NEASC	2014 (upcoming)	2010	Yes
Morrisville University	SACS	2012	2007	Yes

When faculty spoke about assessment for accountability, they used phrases like "we had to do it" (faculty member at Stamper); "required to demonstrate accountability" (faculty member at Carlow); "We all know that it's a done deal" (faculty member at GSU). SLO assessment for accountability is a fait accompli for these institutions; their regional accreditors require it. Faculties in these institutions don't choose if their institution will incorporate SLO or SLO assessment. They might have a choice among

which SLO assessments to use, or be allowed a vote to determine whether the CLA will be the assessment their institution uses. But either get on board or not, is the message they are hearing from administrators, because assessment is "here to stay," a phrase oft mentioned by both faculty and administrators.

When faculty perceive assessment only for the purpose of external accountability, they are passive toward SLO assessment and the CLA—reluctant to be involved in committees or activities involving linking faculty more closely to assessment. For example, the difficulty Ari, a mid-level administrator at GSU, discovered when trying to persuade faculty to participate in the CLA Institute and incorporate CLA-like tasks in their courses. This faculty passivity is what Stanley Ikenberry and George Kuh (2015) refer to as a "culture of compliance" that they feel "tends to dominate the assessment of student learning outcomes at most colleges and universities" (p. 5). They argue that because external forces pushed forward the assessment movement in higher education, these forces "unintentionally nurtured the unfortunate side effect of casting student learning outcomes assessment as an act of compliance rather than a volitional faculty and institutional responsibility" (Ikenberry & Kuh 2015:5). Oftentimes, this culture of compliance or passivity is because faculty believe that SLO assessment activity does not seem to provide them with useful information on how to improve teaching and learning, which I will explore later in this section.

Beyond seeing SLO assessment as a reporting tool for external constituents, some faculty across institutions shared that they initially thought that assessment had a more nefarious intention and that was to assess the professor—assessment to hold individual faculty accountable. Professors mentioned that having to incorporate SLO assessment

was a message to faculty indicating that they are not trusted to execute their jobs, that assessment questioned their abilities to teach. And this led to a concern that assessment expands administrator oversight, especially into academics and the individual's teaching. This perception of administrative intrusion into faculty jurisdiction not only worried faculty members, but resulted in faculty resisting SLO assessment.

When faculty think the aim of assessment is a direct evaluation of them—an attack on their professional role—they respond forcefully. The faculty at Stamper is an example of this. And that concern is not entirely misplaced. While most of the institutions in my study currently do not use SLO assessment results to evaluate faculty, this may change in the future. A couple of administrators at GSU mentioned that while there is nothing concrete as of yet, there is some consideration to try and incorporate assessment data into professional evaluations.

Assessment to Improve Teaching and Learning

Much of the faculty discussion pertaining to assessment to improve teaching and learning had more to do with specific course assessment or program-level assessments rather than general institution-wide assessments like the CLA. This is unsurprising because the challenge with CLA results (and this was said by faculty across all five institutions) is that the sample of CLA test-takers is too small, making it difficult for individual faculty or departments to use the results to make any meaningful pedagogical changes in their own courses or programs. Additionally, because the CLA measures general skills like critical thinking and written communication, faculty were not sure how to translate CLA results into their specific courses, e.g., Math 101, European History, etc. Without direct linkages between CLA results and pedagogical changes, faculty tended to

exhibit a two-tiered response to CLA: they might support the concept of the CLA as a test to measure general education outcomes, for example, but they did not see that it could or should have any impact on their own work, in their own courses.

But faculty who articulated an understanding of assessment as a means to improve teaching and learning correspondingly saw assessment as part of the professorial role. That is, a faculty member's articulation of the aim of assessment to improve teaching and learning was often said in conjunction with their assertion that assessment was part of their work. These individual faculty members could make the connection between assessment results and their courses. If they discovered that the CLA results indicated that their students' written communication skills were weak, they increased the number of writing assignments in a course, for example. It is in the following, third claim that I explore further how faculty articulation of the aim of assessment to improve teaching and learning facilitates their acceptance of assessment as part of the professorial role.

On a slightly different twist on assessment for accountability, a few faculty members in several of the institutions saw assessment was a way for faculty to conduct research on their own teaching practices. They saw it as conducting research on their course and using the findings for self-improvement.

Assessment for Institutional Status Elevation

Positive institutional CLA results—that is, being able to show value-added growth from freshman to senior year—for non-selective institutions can be used as a way to distinguish themselves in the field of higher education institutions, to enhance an institution's reputation, and to increase faculty support of the CLA. Value-added scores as measured by the CLA "estimates an institution's contribution to learning" by

"providing scores that can be interpreted as relative to institutions testing students of similar entering academic ability. This allows all schools, not just selective ones, to demonstrate their relative educational efficiency" (Fall 2013 CLA Institutional Report for Stamper College).

Institutions such as Stamper College and GSU, which draw the majority of their students from certain regions within the state, have used their positive CLA value-added results (they have used the CLA for the longest period of time and most consistently amongst the five institutions) to enhance their reputation beyond their region, as a selling-point for recruitment purposes, and to establish legitimacy to outsiders as an effective teaching institution. As Jerome, a mid-level administrator from GSU, said, "it helps to tell our story."

The Changing Professorial Role: A Place for Assessment?

I examined the different ways in which faculty understood the aim of assessment: assessment for accountability, assessment to improve teaching and learning (or some combination of the two), and assessment for institutional status elevation. Mapping out how faculty understand the aim of assessment is important because their understanding of assessment influenced whether they saw assessment as something to be incorporated into their professorial role or not. In this section, based on my data, I argue that the professorial role in these five institutions is changing. Faculty across all institutions explained that their professorial role as teachers was expanding into other domains. Some faculty members worried that even what they considered to be the core of their professorial role—what I describe as the "teaching ethos"—is changing. In light of the pervasiveness of SLO assessment in all five of these institutions, I probed faculty

respondents to see whether they thought assessment was part of their professorial role, their arguments for why it was or why it was not, and what impacts they perceived assessment was having on their role.

The faculty participants in my study either internalized assessment as part of their job, seeing it as an essential part of the ability to improve one's teaching and help students' learning, or they did not see it as part of their work, seeing it as an intrusion into their autonomy. What the data also suggest is that non-faculty, namely administrators, are the ones taking a strong lead in changing the parameters of the professorial role. Administrators more consistently than faculty asserted in interviews that assessment is part of the professor's job.

The Teaching Ethos

Faculty and administrators in all five institutions consistently described their institutions as "teaching institutions." So it followed that when I asked faculty to describe their roles and responsibilities as a professor, many brought up teaching first. They said that potential faculty members who talk about their research first and foremost would not be considered a good fit. Based on my faculty interviews, there emerged a "teaching ethos" that considers teaching to be personal, and that sees teaching as a vocation and not a job and therefore requires the professor to have an institution-service orientation and not a self-service orientation.

When faculty talked about teaching, they spoke of it in more intimate terms than as just part of a job description. It was part of their identity. "Teaching is personal," said Tina, a faculty member from the University of Carlow. Many faculty members in the other institutions articulated some variation of this. But what did this mean? In trying to

unpack the meaning, I found that faculty understood their roles as teachers to be something more than just providing academic guidance to students. They saw themselves as mentors, as career advisors, as friends; they reached out to connect students to other on-campus services as needed; they banded together with colleagues to offer emotional support to a student who had suffered a loss. It is as Emma from the University of Carlow said when she described faculty as "absolutely obsessed with the well-being of students."

The teaching ethos encompasses not just the personal nature of the professorial relationship to the student, but also the internal relationship that the individual has to the professorial role. It is about seeing the work as more than a job, but as a vocation, what Sara from Stamper College called an "…almost religious sense of vocation. Almost monastic at times." In the teaching ethos, the boundaries of one's personal life and work life become blurred. Or as Tina, a faculty member from University of Carlow said, "That's kind of where I see myself: is just kind of working with the students at their vulnerable moments early on. That's where I think you can really make a difference. Kind of the vocational calling of it is getting students that are confused about where they are and where they're going and getting the on the right track." Frank, a faculty representative from Stamper, asserted, "It's not a punch the clock job." Teaching is part of one's identity. In *The Call to Teach* (1995), David Hansen addressed teaching as a vocation, albeit in middle to high school teachers. He wrote, "vocation emerges at the crossroads of public service and personal fulfillment. Vocation describes work that is of service to others, and that at the same time provides the person with a sense of identity and meaning" (p. 115).

Faculty across the five institutions who spoke about teaching as a vocation rather than a job often held an institution-service orientation, rather than a self-service orientation. This institution-service orientation encompassed an understanding that, as a faculty member, you undertook responsibilities if they contributed to the well-being of the institution. Faculty who had the institution-service orientation spoke in terms of "service," "selflessness," and "willingness" to take on more, not fewer, responsibilities.

I would like to take a moment to examine this institution-service framework because I think it assists us in helping us understand why faculty might support assessment activities even though they might personally be less than enthusiastic about SLO, SLO assessment, or the CLA. When faculty have this institution-service orientation—and some of the institutions I have described in earlier chapters nurture faculty cultures that uphold and promulgate this as a value (e.g., Stamper College, Redeemer College, some faculty representatives at Grant State University in trying to pass a policy on "collegiality")—faculty generally tended to support the CLA. [Note: In some institutions (e.g., Stamper College, GSU) faculty who had been at the institution for much longer tended to perceive that their younger colleagues did not adhere to this institution-service framework.]

The Expansion of the Teaching Role into Other Domains

Faculties in all five institutions feel the press from administrators to take on responsibilities that traditionally belonged solely to other staff in the institution. The areas of involvement that faculty mentioned with frequency were: recruiting prospective students, being more involved in the retention of students, taking on more administrative duties relating to increased demands for SLO reporting and SLO assessment. For my

study, I focused on whether faculty considered assessment to be part of their job. Generally, faculty who had been in the profession longer brought up the expansion of the teaching role into other domains more than their younger, newer colleagues. This is unsurprising considering that the older faculty brought up these increased responsibilities in contrast to what they used to do. Newer faculty didn't really bring this up, perhaps because they have not known anything different.

Faculty who Accept Assessment as Part of the Professorial Role

Before discussing what faculty think about assessment's place in the professorial role, I want to mention that administrators across the institutions consistently articulated that assessment *is* part of the professor's job. They advanced the common position that faculty in their institutions need to think beyond just their discipline, their courses, and their department and to think about institution-wide student learning outcomes and how what is taught at the individual course-level relates to the larger picture.

Faculty across institutions seemed divided about whether assessment is part of their professional role. Those who accepted assessment as part of the professional role did so because they believed that assessment improves teaching and learning, and they tended to lean favorably toward SLO assessment and the CLA. They expressed SLO assessment as an essential component to being a teacher and a researcher because assessment can be a way of conducting research on one's own teaching strategies. These faculty would say that because of their role as teachers and researchers, they view assessment as a way of conducting actual research on how they're doing as teachers and using the assessment data to us improve what they were doing which would only benefit the students. Several of the faculty members who accepted that assessment was part of

the professorial role had leadership positions (e.g., chair of the department) and so were able to communicate to new, incoming faculty members that assessment was part of the job. Administrators, too, reinforced this message in professional development workshops for new faculty.

Because teaching takes primacy in the professorial role amongst the faculty in the institutions I interviewed, their identity as a teacher first and foremost supersedes their discomfort at being told what to do by administrators. I touched on this earlier when I brought up the teaching ethos. If they believe it is the best interest of their students, and they believe that assessment can help them improve teaching and learning, then they are willing to try it. This was certainly the case amongst the faculty I interviewed at Stamper College. Some faculty had reservations about SLO assessment and the CLA, but they were willing to try it if it might help their students.

Faculty Who Do Not Accept Assessment as Part of the Professorial Role

Faculty members' negative responses to the CLA across institutions are connected to the perception that CLA and SLO assessment in general is not part of the professorial role. In their estimation, SLO assessment and the CLA are not connected to the teaching and learning enterprise. Instead, they argued that assessments are add-on work, the results are not directly useful to the professor, and they are only for the purposes of providing accountability data to external stakeholders only (just for face validity). Those who rejected assessment as part of the professorial role marshaled several arguments.

One of the recurring points of contention that faculty mentioned was over jurisdiction, specifically their jurisdiction over curriculum. They argued that SLO assessments limit faculty autonomy, impinge on academic freedom, and pave the way for

more administrative insertion into teaching and curriculum (faculty's jurisdiction). A few faculty members mentioned that they feel constrained that they have to write down outcomes for a course, or use a department-wide rubric to evaluate student papers, or that that they have to align their course description to meet institution-wide learning outcomes. They bucked against having any outside involvement in what they were doing within their classrooms. I did, however, find evidence suggesting that faculty were the ones taking the lead in defining the outcomes. While administrators were often the ones initiating a general education revision (often because a reaccreditation was underway), the committees doing the revising were populated with faculty members.

Other faculty voiced concern that assessment de-professionalizes faculty. This concern is connected to their understanding of the aim of assessment as assessment for accountability, which I described in some detail earlier in this chapter. I will add that faculty thought assessment de-professionalizes because it is reductionist; it simplifies the complicated nature of faculty "work" as something quantifiable—a series of data points and numbers.

One final interesting aspect about faculty who do not accept assessment as part of the professorial role versus those who do is that there appears to be a difference in perception between younger faculty and older faculty. I will discuss this in the following section.

Variance in Faculty Response to SLO, SLO Assessment, And the CLA Within Institutions

This may seem like an obvious point to make: how can you get two faculty members to agree, much less one hundred or more faculty members? But what emerged

from my interviews across institutions is that response and receptiveness to SLO assessment and the CLA could sometimes be broken down generally into sub-groups, and these sub-groups were identified consistently across institutions. The first variance in response that was identified was between newer faculty and more established faculty; within this variance, there was a difference in response between faculty with more status and power; the second variance in response was between faculty in professional programs versus faculty in traditional liberal arts programs.

One of the limitations of my study, however, is that in focusing on establishing *collective* faculty voice, I deliberately narrowed my faculty participants to faculty in positions where they could legitimately claim to speak on behalf of faculty colleagues. These were often department chairs; chairs or active participants of faculty committees such as Curriculum Committee, Promotion and Tenure, Assessment, etc.; faculty representatives on Faculty Assembly; and faculty who were considered leaders by their colleagues and/or administrators. As such, the data available are limited, but even so, I found it important to highlight these sub-groups because they emerged consistently among interviewees across all five institutions.

Newer Faculty Versus More Established Faculty

Faculty and administrators across all five institutions remarked that newer faculty, relatively fresh from receiving their PhDs, seemed more open and accepting of SLO assessment and the CLA than their older, more established counterparts. They were inclined to say that younger faculty were "less scared of it," "more willing to do this," "They're embracing it," and "excited about trying new things," They were also more apt to see assessment as part of their job. Not only did older faculty and administrators

comment on this, but the younger faculty members in my study also said this about themselves. The younger faculty generally expressed surprise that their colleagues offered resistance or articulated concerns about SLO assessment.

Administrators have homed in on newer faculty receptivity, and one way they are reinforcing the message that assessment is part of the professorial job is through professional development. At GSU, senior-level administrators host a semester-long seminar every fall for new faculty members, and they cover the CLA and the CLA Institute. At the University of Carlow, administrators reached out to younger faculty to participate in the CLA in the Classroom Performance Task Academy, and this is a professional development activity that faculty can put in their file for tenure and promotion review. In this way, administrators are creating a sub-set of young leaders who they hope will be experts and leaders in SLO assessment moving forward.

Faculty members, young and old, described resistance from the more established faculty as stemming from a time when the professorial role was different. "A different era," as one professor at GSU said. A tenured professor at the University of Carlow said, "we're still trying to cling to old forms." These older, more established faculty put forth the arguments I laid out in the previous section about why faculty don't accept assessment as part of their professorial role.

Differences in status and power are another way to explain the divide between newer faculty and older faculty. Tenured faculty feel less compelled to give politically correct responses (i.e., responses aligned with administrators' viewpoints), and they are more comfortable voicing concerns about the CLA to administrators and to their colleagues. They are also less inclined to make changes to their work role (though I did

encounter many older, tenured faculty who were vocal supporters and enthusiasts of assessment), and they would bring up the academic freedom argument more. Claire, a tenured professor at the University of Carlow who has been at the institution for over two decades, pointed out that not too many of the younger faculty would protest if senior administration said they would have to do assessment "probably because they don't feel as comfortable in their position." That is, senior faculty can vocalize resistance because they are more secure in their role and position in the institution; they are less concerned with projecting collegiality with their peers and with the administration (which in some of these institutions is a criteria for tenure evaluation).

Professional Programs Versus Traditional Liberal Arts

Difference in faculty response can also be understood according to faculty location in specific programs or departments. Faculty and administrators in the five institutions mentioned that they saw a trend where faculty involved in the professional degree programs (e.g., Education, Business, Nursing) were more accepting of SLO and SLO assessment than their colleagues representing the traditional liberal arts.

Faculty from the professional programs at Redeemer agreed that they were more familiar and experienced with assessment because their departments are accountable to external, discipline-specific accreditors. As one department chair from one of these departments explained, assessment is pretty much embedded and the faculty are very familiar with it. Because of the criteria I used to determine my participant list for each institution, I did not have enough faculty members in each institution to be able to discern distinctions among the faculty by discipline (e.g., faculty from the Social Sciences versus the Natural Sciences versus the Humanities).

Jurisdictional Boundaries of Assessment Vary from Institution to Institution

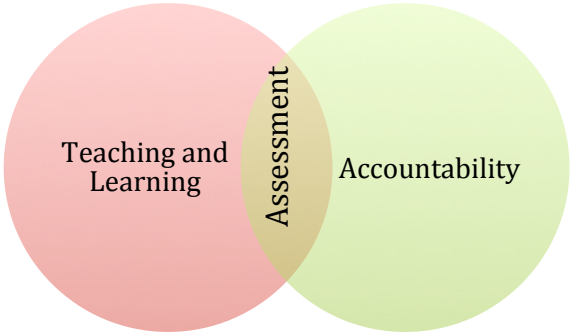
My fifth and last claim is that jurisdictional boundaries of assessment vary from institution to institution. These boundaries are evolving and are being negotiated and renegotiated. Several of the institutions in my study constructed a "culture of assessment" to try to anchor these boundaries.

Andrew Abbott (1988) focused on the link between a profession and its work—the "jurisdiction":

> The central phenomenon of professional life is thus the link between a profession and its work, a link I shall call jurisdiction. To analyze professional development is to analyze how this link is created in work, how it is anchored by formal and informal social structure, and how the interplay of jurisdictional links between professions determines the history of the individual professions themselves (p. 20).

The onset and expansion of SLO assessment in the field of higher education, epitomized by the CLA, provides an opportunity to examine the interplay between administrators and faculty as they determine the jurisdiction of assessment. Administrators claim jurisdiction over SLO assessment (and the CLA) because assessment provides data required to respond to demands from external groups. Faculty claim jurisdiction over assessment because the aim of assessment is to improve teaching and learning. Figure A (p. 336) is a graphical representation of the assessment jurisdiction that is currently being negotiated between administrators and faculty. The circle on the left is the teaching and learning space traditionally controlled by faculty. The circle on the right is the accountability space over which administrators wield authority. In the middle is "assessment": this is the space that must be navigated in each institution, with administrators and faculty either in concert or in conflict.

FIGURE A. Jurisdiction of Assessment



Building A Culture of Assessment

In three out of the five institutions in this study, faculty and/or administrators referred to having or trying to build a "culture of assessment" on their campus. Reviewing the data across all of the institutions, I found that constructing a "culture of assessment" was an attempt primarily by administrators (but sometimes in concert with faculty) to try to anchor the jurisdictional boundaries of assessment: to influence and expand faculty support of assessment activities, to expand administrative control over assessment activities, and to build structures to concretely connect faculty to assessment. Building a culture of assessment often incorporated these three elements:

- Providing professional development for faculty;
- Expanding administration by hiring assessment navigators; and
- Institutionalizing SLO assessment.

These are the elements that concretely link a profession—the faculty—to the assessment work. I shall spend the rest of this section expanding on each of these three elements.

(1) Providing professional development for faculty

Overlaying the professional development for faculty is an assessment messaging campaign by administrators that assessment is an integral component of teaching and

learning, and that it is a part of the professorial job. Administrators enlist and cultivate faculty to become the new leaders of SLO assessment and the CLA on campus. They do this by putting them in positions where they are directly involved in SLO assessment (i.e. General Education committees, reaccreditation committees, development of the Quality Enhancement Plan, etc.). They also do this by sending teams of faculty members to a CLA in the Classroom Performance Task Academy. And they do this through on-site professional development seminars for new faculty. For administrators, professional development is a way to try and get faculty to internalize assessment as part of their professional role. By starting with a sub-set of faculty, administrators see this is an opportunity to change the mindset of the larger group of faculty.

But it is not just administrators taking the initiative in trying to change faculty mindset. Faculty colleagues who are well versed in SLO assessment are trying to get their colleagues more comfortable with the tools and language of assessment. They are leading faculty workshops on writing student learning outcomes (Stamper College), they are providing one-on-one mentoring/tutoring with their colleagues (the Assessment Committee at Redeemer College), and they are training their colleagues on developing CLA-like tasks (Grant State University).

(2) Expanding administration by hiring assessment navigators

Administrators in several institutions have mid-level administrators in place to help explain SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA to faculty. These "assessment navigators" try and help faculty connect assessment results to the classroom. These "assessment navigators" act as mediators between administration and faculty: they are usually someone with an administrative-level understanding of the big picture of

assessment and accountability but are also former faculty members who can translate that big picture to faculty. While putting a mid-level administrator in place might emphasize faculty's feelings that the size of administration is ever-increasing, that they are being increasingly "managed" (Rhoades 1998), this is lessened to some extent when faculty members take on these mid-level positions. In all five institutions, these positions were taken by former faculty members; and in all except for one institution, they were faculty already teaching in the institution. Faculty expressed more confidence and trust when they saw a colleague taking the position, and they also tended to assign the position more legitimacy.

(3) Institutionalizing SLO assessment

There was a range of ways in which SLO assessment was being institutionalized across the five institutions. By institutionalization, I include the creation (or existence) of committees to oversee the CLA and similar assessment activities, embedding SLO assessment into the general education curriculum, and integrating assessment results into reporting structures,

Committees with oversight over assessment activities such as the CLA often had a mix of faculty and administrator membership. The Assessment Committee or the General Education Committee often seemed to be the units where faculty had the most influence in determining which assessment would be used, how assessment results would be used, and what implications the results would have, if any, on faculty. Not all institutions had an Assessment Committee, however. Stamper College was in the process of developing an Institutional Effectiveness Committee, creating a home base for assessment at Stamper. Interviewees envisioned the membership to be a mix of senior-level administrators, mid-

level administrators, and faculty. Morrisville University used to have an Assessment Committee comprised of administrators and faculty, but it had fallen by the wayside since the new president took office in 2010. It, too, was in the process of being revived when I visited the campus in fall 2013. Redeemer College had a faculty-led Assessment Committee in place, but without much influence amongst faculty overall as it can only make recommendations based on each departments Assessment Plan. While the CLA was run out of the Academic Affairs Office at Grant State University, the Core Curriculum Committee (composed of faculty) will be looking at SLO assessment and trying to connect it back to teaching and learning in the core courses.

Moves to integrate assessment results into reporting structures are beginning to take hold amongst my institutions. Grant State University is the clearest example of this. Administrators have embedded SLO and SLO assessment into its Core Curriculum, the Report for Continuous Improvement, and the Operational Plan and Assessment.

Jurisdiction of Assessment is Fluid

Among my five institutions, administrators and faculty are working together to establish the jurisdiction of assessment—the roles and responsibilities are being negotiated institution by institution. The data did not show that administrators and faculty in conflict as these negotiations are occurring. And faculty articulated that it was appropriate for administrators to be involved in SLO assessment. It will be interesting to see if, in a few years' time, administrators' initiatives in establishing a culture of assessment result in faculty perceiving assessment as an administrative activity and therefore separating it from their professorial role, or if it results in their taking ownership of assessment activities.

Conclusions

Since I embarked on this study, more, not fewer, institutions have developed student learning outcomes, integrated student learning outcomes assessment, and engaged in conversations on their campuses about ways to assess them. According to Kuh, Jankowski, Ikenberry, and Kinzie (2014), stated learning outcomes for students are now the "norm" in higher education. In their 2013 survey of 1,202 provosts or their designates (Kuh and Ikenberry conducted a similar survey in 2009), the authors found that some 84 percent of institutions reported they had common learning outcomes for their students, compared to 74 percent in 2009 (Kuh et al. 2014).

When I began this study, I wanted to give voice to faculty who have been largely quiet in discussions of SLO assessment. I believed that investigating faculty response to the CLA would provide an opportunity to uncover that voice, and in so doing, be able to understand why faculty respond to SLO assessment and the CLA differentially.

I set out to explore collective faculty response to SLO assessment and the CLA at bachelor's degree-granting postsecondary institutions. Using a multi-case study methodology to illustrate this phenomenon, I selected four small, private institutions that belonged to the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) and joined the CIC/CLA Consortium in the mid to late-2000s. The fifth institution that participated in my study was a mid-sized, public institution, part of a statewide system of more than 15 higher education institutions.

My research question was "Why does collective faculty response to student learning outcomes assessments like the Collegiate Learning Assessment vary among institutions?" In asking this central question, I subsequently asked two sub-questions: (a)

how do faculty understand the aim of student learning outcomes assessments like the CLA; and (b) how do faculty perceive this kind of assessment impacting their role as professors? I believed that understanding collective faculty response to student learning outcomes assessment would enhance our understanding of the professoriate: how they perceive accountability and assessment impacting their profession, their identity as professors, and their role in the institution.

In Chapter II, I examined three broad fields of literature that I thought would be most relevant to this study. First, I drew on organizational theory, specifically collegial and bureaucratic models of organizations. This provided me with two lenses of organizational structure that assisted me in analyzing the pattern of relation and interaction between groups in colleges and universities. Then, I discussed professionalization theory within the sociology of professions, which examines groups seeking to establish, monopolize, and maintain their spheres of expertise. Additionally, I introduced the systems model of professions, which conceptualizes professions as a dynamic and competitive system where groups establish, maintain, and/or address challenges to jurisdictional boundaries—the connective tissue between the profession and its work. I thought that faculty response to SLO assessment might reflect a within-organization struggle over jurisdictional boundaries (e.g., curriculum and instruction), highlighting faculty tensions over perceived symbolic and literal loss of power within the institution over recent decades (e.g., weakened role in shared governance, diminished role prestige, etc.). In order to probe this further, the third area of literature I reviewed was general trends describing the U.S. higher education academic profession—examining broadly the parameters of academic identity and its culture (its shared values, beliefs, and

attitudes), contemporary changes occurring within the profession, and how this impacts the relationship the faculty have to the institution and to other actors (namely, administrators) in the institution.

I believed that the following might influence faculty response to SLO assessment: (1) whether faculty and administrators had a clash of cognitive frameworks of the organization—where administrators believed it should operate in one way versus faculty who believed in an alternative; (2) the extent to which faculty in an institution feel that their jurisdictional boundaries are being challenged and/or encroached upon by another group; and (3) whether faculty face challenges to their power and diminishment or change in their role.

In Chapter III, I laid out the research design to answer my research question. I believed that a multi-case study using qualitative research methods would be the best approach. I chose five institutions and interviewed a total of 66 faculty and administrators in semi-structured interviews.

In Chapters IV, V, and VI, I presented my findings from each of the five institutions. Each case study told a story, a story about faculty working in higher education today: navigating and negotiating their voice and power within the institution; trying to understand this "new" world of student learning outcomes, SLO assessment, and the CLA; and grappling with what it means to incorporate SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA into the institution and into their work as professors.

In this chapter, Chapter VII, I synthesized and analyzed the findings from my study. I found that several factors influence faculty response to student learning outcomes assessment like the Collegiate Learning Assessment. First, faculty apply a "collegial

framework" that guides their role within the institution and their expectations of administrators' roles. Conversely, administrators apply an "administrative framework" that guides their role within the institution and their expectations of faculty's roles. What the data revealed was that the congruence or dissonance between the collegial framework and the administrative framework influenced faculty response to the CLA.

Second, faculty articulate the aim of assessment in several ways: assessment for accountability, assessment to improve teaching and learning, assessment as some combination of the two, and assessment for institutional status elevation. Faculty understanding of these aims influenced whether they saw assessment as something to be incorporated into their professorial role or not.

Third, the professorial role in these five institutions is expanding into other domains. While their responsibilities are increasing, their power is weakening. In several institutions, faculty professional authority, even in academic matters, is shrinking, while administrative authority is expanding. SLO assessment and the CLA allow us to see and magnify this relationship. Some faculty incorporate assessment into their professional role whereas others do not. Administrator expectations are that assessment is part of the professorial role.

There is variance in faculty response to SLO, SLO assessment, and the CLA within institutions. Sub-groups of faculty emerged from the data that responded more positively to SLO assessment and the CLA than others. Faculty response to the CLA is closely connected to whether assessment is perceived as part of the professor's role.

Finally, I set out to examine whether assessment is a contested area between faculty and administrators. Who "owns" assessment in the institution? Because

assessment falls in the realm of accountability and teaching and learning, both administrators and faculty have roles in assessment. But what the data showed is that these roles are still being negotiated and renegotiated. Jurisdictional boundaries of assessment vary from institution to institution. Several of the institutions in my study constructed a "culture of assessment" to try to anchor these boundaries, and it was mostly administrators and not faculty taking the lead in anchoring these boundaries. One potential area of concern is that as assessment boundaries solidify, the boundaries will work in the administrators' favor and might provide administrators with more latitude to encroach into academic matters. Then, the struggle is less about jurisdiction of work (Abbott 1988), but becomes a larger power struggle between faculty and administrators, where faculty are trying to regain lost autonomy (Freidson 1970; Larson 1977).

These findings have refined my conceptual framework. I approached this study with the hypothesis that there would be a clash of cognitive frameworks at play between faculty and administrators. While I did find this in some of my institutions, I am intrigued that faculty in institutions like Grant State University exhibited a mixed framework of both collegial and administrative. I posit that the growing corporate model of institutions in higher education—something that emerged from my study and which I did not address fully in this study—might consequently be changing the framework of faculty as well towards a new, hybrid framework. Correspondingly, with the potential expansion of the corporate model in higher education institutions, I see an increasing rise in a tripartite organization of administrators, mid-level administrators, and faculty.

When I began this study, I set out to expand our understanding of the professoriate. I believe that I have achieved, through the lens of SLO assessment and the

CLA, a deeper understanding of the challenges faculty are facing in these small to mid-sized teaching institutions. This study fills a gap in the professionalization literature by addressing more fully the interaction of professionalized roles in organizations and the interaction of professional groups within an organization. In this age of student learning outcomes assessment, my research showed that faculty are navigating, negotiating, and renegotiating their position and role within the institution; grappling with defining how, and if, assessment is part of the professorial role; and working in concert, and sometimes in conflict, with administrators to establish the jurisdiction of assessment.

The higher education landscape is changing profoundly, and professorial roles are transforming as a result. If SLO assessment is to become something more than another data point to report to external publics, if SLO assessment is to be used to help professors improve teaching and learning, then it is essential that faculty in higher education take the lead. If they do not, then the "practice" of assessment is reduced to a mere formality: faculty will effectively decouple assessment from their professorial role, sending their students off to take assessments whose results will have absolutely no bearing on what happens in the classroom.

Limitations of the Study and Directions for Further Research

One of the ever-present frustrations of the researcher is the wish to have done "more": maybe just one more institution, a few more interviews, and more (or different) questions. While I am confident that I interviewed the individuals who were necessary to inform my study and tell the story, I also recognize that there were individuals who I did not reach who might have provided a different viewpoint or enhanced a viewpoint, particularly around resistance to SLO assessment and the CLA. Because a few of these individuals in each institution declined to be interviewed (though some did agree and

spoke to me quite frankly), I did my best to try to obtain these views by asking their colleagues, friends, and faculty representatives. But in trying to establish faculty "voice" in this study, I need to acknowledge that there were those who chose not share it. One suggestion for further research would be to try and reach the faculty who might not have felt comfortable giving voice. This might be achieved through the relative anonymity of a survey rather than a face-to-face interaction. A survey might also provide the opportunity to explore further the within-institution variation in faculty response to SLO assessment and the CLA that emerged from my study.

I want to acknowledge that these five institutions are not representative of the population of institutions that have implemented the CLA, so any generalizability is limited. I acknowledge that there might have been some self-selection bias in that the institutions that agreed to participate in my study did so because many of the key players were enthusiastic about the CLA and were comfortable to have that enthusiasm and relative success with the CLA captured. It might be that institutions that struggled more in garnering faculty support were less likely to participate in my study because that lack of enthusiasm or negativity is something that administrators would not want portrayed.

Also, these five institutions that implemented the CLA may not be representative of the population of institutions that have administered the CLA. For example, the five institutions in this study may have been influenced to participate in the CLA because they felt their institutions were more vulnerable to the opinions of external stakeholders and tenuous economic times, and thus saw the CLA as able to assist in some way in their institutional survival and legitimacy. Other institutions—more financially secure, with greater status—might be implementing the CLA simply in order to "tick the box," for

face legitimacy to external constituents such as accreditors. Then there are those institutions that may have considered the CLA but never did it because administrators did not think their faculty would ever agree to implement it. But I approached this as an exploratory study, a study that I have not yet encountered in the literature. I would like to suggest that future research be expanded to include a broader range of institutions, especially elite private and public institutions. Kuh et al (2014) found that "institutional selectivity is negatively related to assessment activity. For almost every category of assessment activity, the more selective an institution's admissions standards, the less likely it is to employ various assessment approaches or use the results." The question of whether administrators and faculty negotiate the jurisdiction of assessment differently in non-selective, teaching institutions compared to other institutional types would be a very interesting one. Based on my research, I would think it likely that the more elite an institution's status, the less inclined faculty are to incorporate assessment into the professorial role, and the more likely administrators are to defer to faculty wishes in this regard.

I believe that a future battleground for jurisdiction between faculty and administrators will be the consideration of assessment results in promotion and tenure decisions. A few of the administrators in the study introduced the possibility of incorporating SLO assessment into the professorial review process.

I also contend that the Assessment Committees, comprised of administrators and faculty, will be the main forums where the heated discussions and establishment of the jurisdiction of assessment will occur, not in Faculty Assemblies. As these committees

work more aggressively to "close the assessment loop"—try to use assessment results to change pedagogy and curriculum—faculty will feel assessment's impact more directly.

A Final Reflection

Finally, I would like to close with my deep gratitude to the sixty-six women and men who agreed to participate in my study—to *be* my study—and share their voices with me. From the beginning of this process, I was determined to represent them as accurately as I could. As I wrote, I could hear Sam's voice as he passionately talked about what it means for him to be a professor, Gwynn's voice quavering as she shared how professorial authority was being taken away, William's enthusiasm for all things CLA, and Sara's laughter reminiscing about the good ole' days. Writing for them has been a great responsibility and a great honor.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

The Collegiate Learning Assessment Sample Prompts[31]

Sample Performance Task

Students are provided with the following instructions when taking the Performance Task:

> You will have 90 minutes to complete this task. This task will ask you to analyze a collection of different types of information. You will then use your analysis to prepare answers to a series of questions. Although you may not be familiar with some of the topics covered, you should be able to prepare appropriate answers by carefully using and thoughtfully reflecting on the information given to you. Your answers should clearly state what you mean. Please do your best.

Students are then given access to a Document Library that contains a Scenario and seven Documents.

> **Scenario**: Pat Stone is running for reelection as mayor of Jefferson, a city in the state of Columbia. Mayor Stone's opponent in this contest is Dr. Jamie Eager. Dr. Eager is a member of the Jefferson City Council. You are a consultant to Mayor Stone.
>
> Dr. Eager made the following three arguments during a recent T.V. interview: First, Mayor Stone's proposal for reducing crime by increasing the number of police officers is a bad idea. Dr. Eager said "it will only lead to more crime." Dr. Eager supported this argument with a chart that shows that counties with a relatively large number of police officers per resident tend to have more crime than those with fewer officers per resident.
>
> Second, Dr. Eager said "we should take the money that would have gone to hiring more police officers and spend it on the STRIVE drug treatment program." Dr. Eager supported this argument by referring to a news release by the Washington Institute for Social Research that describes the effectiveness of the STRIVE drug treatment program. Dr. Eager also said that there were other scientific studies that showed the STRIVE program was effective.
>
> Third, Dr. Eager said that because of the strong correlation between drug use and crime in Jefferson, reducing the number of addicts would lower the city's crime rate. To support this argument. Dr. Eager showed a chart that compared the percentage of drug addicts in a Jefferson zip code area to the number of crimes committed in that area. Dr. Eager based this chart on crime and community data tables that were provided by the Jefferson Police Department.

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[31] Sample prompts adapted from *Architecture of the CLA Tasks* retrieved online on February 28, 2013 http://www.collegiatelearningassessment.org/files/Architecture_of_the_CLA_Tasks.pdf

Mayor Stone has asked you to prepare a memo that analyzes the strengths and limitations of each of Dr. Eager's three main points, including any holes in those arguments. Your memo also should contain your conclusions about each of Dr. Eager's three points, explain the reasons for your conclusions, and justify those conclusions by referring to the specific documents, data, and statements on which your conclusions are based.

Documents:

- Investigator's Memo
- Newspaper Story
- Police Tables
- Report on STRIVE
- Crime Statistics
- Dr. Eager's Chart
- Research Abstracts

Sample Make-An-Argument Prompt

Students are provided with the following instructions when taking Make-An-Argument:

You will have 45 minutes to plan and write an argument on the topic on the next screen. You should take a position to support or oppose the statement. Use examples taken from your reading, coursework, or personal experience to support your position. Your essay will be evaluated on how well you do the following:

- State your position
- Organize, develop, and express your ideas
- Support your ideas with relevant reasons and/or examples
- Address counterarguments to your position
- Control the elements of standard written English

Before you begin writing, you want to take a few minutes to decide on a position and to plan a response. Be sure to develop your ideas fully and organize them coherently, but leave time to reread what you have written and make any revisions you think are necessary.

Prompt:

Government funding would be better spent on preventing crime than in dealing with criminals after the fact.

Sample Critique-An-Argument Prompt

Students are provided with the following instructions when taking Critique-An-Argument:

There is something wrong with the argument presented below. It is your job to explain what is wrong with the argument. Discuss:

- Any flaws in the argument
- Any questionable assumptions

- Any missing information
- Any inconsistencies

What we are interested in is your critical thinking skills and how well you write a response. You will have 30 minutes to respond to the argument. You will be judged on how well you do the following:

- Explain any flaws in the points the author makes
- Organize, develop, and express your ideas
- Support your ideas with relevant reasons and/or examples
- Control the elements of standard written English

Do not discuss the structure of the argument. We do not want sentences like the following:

- "The argument needs a better introductory sentence."
- "This argument has some facts that help support its ideas, but the ideas are somewhat unorganized."
- "The argument needs more detail, more evidence to get its points across."
- The arguments does a great job of recommending a solution and a way to fix the problem."

Your essay should be about what the argument says, not how it's organized.

Prompt:

The number of marriages that end in divorce keeps growing. A large percentage of them are from June weddings. Because June weddings are so popular, couples end up being engaged for a long time just so that they can get married in the summer months. The number of divorces gets bigger with each passing year, and the latest news is that more than 1 out of 3 marriages will end in divorce. So, if you want a marriage that lasts forever, it is best to do everything you can to prevent getting divorced. Therefore, it is good advice for young couples to have short engagements and choose a month other than June for a wedding.

Appendix B

Informed Consent, Participant's Rights, and Investigator's Verification of Explanation Forms

Faculty Response to Value-Added Assessment Study
Teachers College, Columbia University
525 West 120th Street, New York, NY 10027
(212) 678-3000
www.tc.edu

INFORMED CONSENT

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH: You are invited to participate in a research study that examines how higher education faculty at an institution respond to value-added assessment and the key causal factors driving this response. My name is Esther Hong Delaney and I am a doctoral candidate in Sociology of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

What the study is about: The purpose of this study is to learn how the professorial profession perceives accountability and assessment impacting their profession, their identity as professors, and their role in the institution.

What I will ask you to do: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in a 90-minute interview. The interview will include questions about your profession, the role and responsibilities of faculty in the institution, and how faculty perceive issues of accountability and assessment. With your permission, the interview will be audio-taped.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: While I will take measures to ensure your and institution's confidentiality, there is a slight risk that despite my efforts to de-identify you and the institution, certain described events and/or youl might be recognized by a reader. Thus, there is some risk of embarrassment, discomfort, and/or recrimination in your employment. There are no direct benefits to participation. You may receive indirect benefits from the knowledge generated from this study.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you agree to have this interview audio-taped, you may request to stop the taping at anytime. If you decide to take part in this study, you are free to withdraw at any time.

DATA STORAGE TO PROTECT CONFIDENTIALITY: The records of this study will be kept private. I will not discuss with the dissertation committee or anyone else any names, locations, or identifying particulars of the participants and institutions. I will do all that I can to de-identify you and the institution. However, there is always the possibility that a reader might recognize you because he/she is familiar with the circumstance(s) being described who holds a particular title in the institution. To mitigate this, position titles specific to the institution will be replaced by generic institutional titles. Hard copies of research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researcher will have access to the records. Digital records will be kept in a password-protected file to which only the researcher has access. I will transcribe all audiotapes. Pseudonyms will be substituted in the transcripts for all names of persons, institutions, cities, and states. Every step will be taken to disguise adequately your identity and teaching location in any published materials or presentations.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your participation will take approximately 90 minutes.

HOW WILL RESULTS BE USED: The results of the study will be used for the dissertation, presented at educational conferences and may be published in professional journal articles and book chapters.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS: The researcher conducting this study is Esther Hong Delaney. You may ask any questions now or at any time during the interview. If you have questions later, you may contact Esther Hong Delaney at eh292@tc.columbia.edu or _____. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Teachers College, Columbia University Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY 10027, Box 151 or call (212) 678-4105.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Faculty Response to Value-Added Assessment Study
Teachers College, Columbia University
525 West 120th Street, New York, NY 10027
(212) 678-3000
www.tc.edu

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS

Principal Investigator: Esther Hong Delaney

Research Title: The Professoriate in an Era of Assessment and Accountability: What Faculty Response to the Collegiate Learning Assessment Reveals About a Profession in the 21st Century Higher Education Institution

- I have read and discussed the Research Description with the researcher. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the purposes and procedures regarding this study.
- My participation in research is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without jeopardy to future medical care, employment, student status or other entitlements.
- The researcher may withdraw me form the research at his/her professional discretion.
- If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue to participate, the investigator will provide this information to me.
- Any information derived from the research project that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
- If at any time I have any questions regarding the research or my participation, I can contact the investigator, who will answer my questions. The investigator's phone number is _____.
- If at any time I have comments, or concerns regarding the conduct of the research or questions about my rights as a research subject, I should contact the Teachers College, Columbia University Institutional Review Board/IRB. The phone number for the IRB is (212) 678-4105. Or, I can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY, 10027, Box 151.
- I should receive a copy of the Research Description and this Participant's Right document.
- If audio taping is part of this research, I ( ) consent to be audio taped. I ( ) do NOT consent to being audio taped. The written audio taped materials will be viewed only by the principal investigator.
- Written and/or audio taped materials ( ) may be viewed in an educational setting outside the research. ( ) may NOT be viewed in an educational setting outside the research.
- My signature means that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

Participant's Name (printed) _____

Investigator's Verification of Explanation

I certify that I have carefully explained the purpose and nature of this research to _____ (participant's name). He/She has had the opportunity to discuss it with me in detail. I have answered all his/her questions and he/she provided the affirmative agreement (i.e. assent) to participate in this research.

Investigator's Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix C

Pre-Interview Form

Preliminary Background Information (Pre-Interview)[32]

Name:

Age:

Year started teaching (in higher education):

Name of institution where currently employed[33]:

Location of institution (city, state):

Year started teaching at current institution:

What subject(s) do you teach:

In what kinds of higher education institution(s) have you taught in the past:

(Example: community college, for-profit, etc.)

What is your current title/position at the institution (please list all):

How long have you held this position(s):

What other positions have you held in this institution in the past:

Have you always held an academic position:

If not, what positions have you had outside of academia (i.e. private sector):

[32] *This page is for internal (researcher's) purposes only*: a standardized format which could be filled out prior to interview via phone or email upon the individual agreeing to participate in the study.

[33] Profile of current institution which contains information such as whether the institution is private or public; the undergraduate student population; Carnegie classification; presence of faculty union, faculty senate; number of administrators and number of faculty; etc.

Appendix D

Faculty Interview Protocol

Interview Day (approximately 90 minutes duration)

I. Professorial Identity and Role in the Institution

How did it happen that you became a professor?

Before becoming a professor, what images of the "professor" did you have?

How did this image differ (if at all) from the dream (ideal) image of the professor?

How (if at all) did this image evolve as you became a professor?
- What prompted these changes?
- If your image remained relatively unchanged, why did it?

Before becoming a professor, what images of the institution—"college" or "university"—did you have? (i.e. its organization, operation, culture, values, etc.)[34]

How (if at all) did your image of the institution change once you became a professor? How did your understanding of the institution evolve over time?
- What prompted these changes?
- If your image remained relatively unchanged, why did it?

In what ways does this institution fit into the conceptualization of your dream (ideal) institution? In what ways does it not?

Please describe the current, overall state of the professoriate your view.
- What specific challenges do you think faculty face in higher education?

Please describe the current state of the professoriate specifically in your institution.
- What specific challenges do you think faculty face?

How, if at all, has your role as a professor changed over the course of your career?

What are your responsibilities as a professor? Are there things that you are asked to do that you think "That's not a professor's responsibility"?
- In what areas are there overlapping responsibilities with other groups in the university (i.e. with administrators)?
- Should these responsibilities be overlapping?

[34] For the purposes of this study, "college" and "university" are used interchangeably, though author acknowledges that individuals may have different conceptualizations of a college versus a university.

II. Governance

What is the purpose and function of the faculty senate in your institution?

How much power does the faculty senate have to influence university-wide decisions? Provide specific examples.

- In your perception, has this influence changed over time? In what way?

How involved are you in the faculty senate? Why or why not? If involved, in what capacity?

What role (if any) do you play in university governance?

Do you participate in any committees that influence curriculum, teaching, and assessment?

- If so, what are they?
- What is your role?
- Are you satisfied with this role(s)? Why or why not?

What is the purpose and function of the faculty union in your institution? (What percentage of faculty are part of the union?)

Are you involved in the faculty union? Why or why not? If involved, in what capacity?

How much power/influence does the faculty union have in the institution? Provide specific examples.

Can you cite any recent (from 2003 onwards) examples of faculty strife with the university administration?

- What precipitated the event?
- How was/was not it resolved?

III. Relationship with the Administration

How would you characterize the "administration" in your institution?

How would you characterize the administration's relationship with faculty in your institution?

To what extent is the administration involved in decisions over curriculum? Over teaching? Over the assessment of student learning?

What do you believe its role and responsibilities are (if any) to curriculum? To teaching? To the assessment of student learning?

Wherein light the strengths of the administration's relationship with faculty? Wherein lie the challenges?

IV. Accountability and Assessment[35]

General:

Are you familiar with the Collegiate Learning Assessment? If so, in what capacity?[36]

What do you believe is the purpose (generally) of standardized, value-added, student learning outcomes assessments like the Collegiate Learning Assessment? (i.e., improvement of teaching and learning, public accountability, control/manage faculty, etc.)

- What/who are the drivers behind such assessments?

What *should* be the purpose of such assessments?

Institution-Specific:

To what degree is there an emphasis in your institution on student learning outcomes assessment? (1 to 10 scale, None to Extremely Heavy).

- Do you agree/disagree with this emphasis? Please explain.
- Who is driving assessment at your institution? What do you believe their aims are?

What do you see as the aim of assessment in your institution?

What has been, if any, your personal experience with assessment at your institution?

Have you noticed a change in importance or emphasis in the past 8 years (CLA began in fall 2004) with student learning outcomes assessment at your institution? If so, please describe.

The Collegiate Learning Assessment:

Do you know (or can you speculate) why assessment, like the CLA, was introduced into your institution?

- What was the catalyst that brought it here? (Was the impetus from outside the institution or inside the institution? Who? Please provide specifics.)
- Please describe the *process* by which the CLA was implemented in your institution. How was it introduced to administrators and faculty? Who had

---

[35] Very important that each interviewee is responding to as similar an understanding of assessment and accountability in this subset of questions. "Assessment": I am focusing the interviewee on value-added, standardized, national, student learning outcomes assessments administered institution-wide; not focused on course-specific assessments like assignments and exams; nor assessments specific (or designed by the institution) to departments or individual colleges within the institution. "Accountability": I am focusing the interviewee on the measurement of student learning outcomes (via assessments) for reporting to groups such as parents, students, administrators, board members, legislators, accreditation bodies, the public writ large, etc.

36 If interviewee is unfamiliar with CLA, provide a brief, one-paragraph description.

primary responsibility? What were the noteworthy events around the CLA? Etc.

In your observation, what has been faculty response to assessment?

- Which faculty have been most vocally resistant? Why?
- Which faculty have been most vocally supportive/open to the idea? Why?
- How have faculty shown their resistance or support? Examples.
- Which faculty have been silent? Why?

Do you think that assessment has had an impact on faculty autonomy in your institution? Please provide examples.

Who, in the institution, has responsibility (jurisdiction) over student learning outcomes assessment? Was this always the case?

Who, in the institution, *should* have responsibility (jurisdiction) over student learning outcomes assessment? Why?

How can/is assessment be an effective tool for faculty? For administrators? What would it take for it to be effective?

What impact, if any, has assessment had on your teaching practices, class content?

How has assessment impacted the relationship of the faculty in this institution with the administrators?

How do you understand accountability? (Specifically the pressure for higher education institutions to be held more accountable to constituents for student learning outcomes.)

What do you understand the main aims of accountability to be?

What impact has accountability had on faculty autonomy in your institution? Please provide examples.

How has accountability impacted the relationship of the faculty in this institution with the administrators?